

Tiger of Mysore: Life and Death of Tipu Sultan

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The maps were drawn by Denys Baker.

Preface

A FELLOW READER at the India Office Library remarked, soon after I had launched upon this biography, 'Most of the recent books on Indian subjects seem to have fallen between two stools'. He meant that they were neither whole-heartedly 'popular', nor scholarly enough to achieve academic status. I am afraid he may again be disappointed in *Tiger of Mysore*. I will merely plead that it has been my intention all along to beguile the general reader with an account of the great Tipu Sultan's stormy life and melodramatic death, and that any scholarly element has only crept in with the irresistible momentum of research!

During this process I have become deeply indebted to many generous people who have helped me with either guidance or criticism, or have told me about their family connections with the Tipu era and in some cases have allowed heirlooms to be reproduced by way of illustration.

As already hinted, the India Office Library,¹ now at Orbit House, Blackfriars Road, London, has been my inevitable haunt. I owe much to its officials, such as Dr. F. Bingle (Keeper of Printed Books) and Miss J. R. Watson (Persian Translator) and above all to Mrs. Mildred Archer and Miss Pauline Harrold (Department of Prints and Drawings) for devoting endless time and patience to Tipu Sultan and his iconography! Similarly, I have frequented the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge the help I have had from Dr. C. H. Philips (Director) and Dr. Kenneth Ballhatchet (Professor of the History of South Asia). At Cambridge I have had the advice of Dr. Percival Spear (Reader in Indian History). Great and appreciative use has been made of the London Library and the libraries of the Oriental Club (Mr. Fergus Innes, Librarian) and the Royal Commonwealth Society.

¹ Though so closely interwoven, there is a distinction between the India Office *Library* and *Records*—hence the initials I.O.L. and I.O.R. in my references.

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Indian scholars with whom I have corresponded are Professor B. Sheik Ali, of the University of Mysore, and Professor Mohibbul Hasan, of the Jamia Millia, New Delhi.

Mr. S. B. Mudappa (Trade Agent for the Government of Mysore in London) has been most patient with all my questions, and much interest in the project has also been shown by Mr. M. D. Mariputtana (Director of Information and Tourism, Government of Mysore).

The chapters on military affairs have benefited from the criticism of my brother-in-law, Brigadier C. J. C. Molony, an Official Historian of World War II.

With regard to illustrations, my first acknowledgement must be to Her Majesty the Queen, who has authorised me to reproduce the surviving parts of Tipu's throne which are now at Windsor Castle. In this connection I am also grateful for the kind offices of Mr. Geoffrey de Bellaigue (Deputy-Surveyor of Her Majesty's Works of Art) and Miss Jane Langton (Registrar of the Royal Archives).

Museum officials gave me unfailing help—at the British Museum Messrs. E. F. Croft-Murray and L. W. Coulson (Department of Prints and Drawings) and Dr. Douglas Barrett (Department of Oriental Antiquities), at the Victoria and Albert Museum Messrs. J. C. Irwin and R. W. Skelton (Indian Section) and A. S. Latham (Enthoven Collection), at the Wallace Collection Mr. A. V. Norman, at Chelsea Royal Hospital Major Stuart Andrew, at the Tower Armouries Mr. H. Russell Robinson and at the National Army Museum Dr. T. A. Heathcote

I also have to thank the Directors of the National Portrait Gallery, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery and in particular the Scottish United Services Museum for their assistance in the matter of photographs.

The list of private owners of Tipu Sultan relics or pictures whom I have consulted is headed by the descendants of all the great commanders in the 1799 storm of Seringapatam. Lord Harris kindly showed me the treasures of Belmont and let me reproduce his Coat of Arms; Sir David Baird, Bt., was similarly helpful with regard to his family heirlooms; His Grace the Duke of Wellington, with his Librarian, Mr. Francis Needham, unravelled a whole series of problems; and I had informative correspondence with Lieut.-Col. Charles Floyd and Lady Victoria Wemyss,

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descendants respectively of Sir John Floyd and Sir Thomas Dallas.

The generosity of the Earl and Countess of Powis and the National Trust placed the remarkable contents of the Clive Museum in Powis Castle at my disposal, and Mr. P. L. Marriott (Agent) looked after photographs there. Lord Scarsdale gave me details of his furniture at Kedleston, Lord Biddulph and his sons and Mr. Edward Holland-Martin provided information on the pictures by Devis which have come down to them, and Mr. P. Svendgaard and Group-Captain R. G. Harman told me about the relics which are in their care at Audley End and Hatfield House respectively. Information of a similar kind came to me from Mr. Alexander Bowlby, Sir George Dundas, Bt., Major E. F. Ferraby, Mr. W. Keith Neal, Lieutenant-Colonel P. J. C. Trousdell, Sir Anthony Weldon Bt., and Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Whitehead.

Others who have helped in a variety of ways are Mr. R. H. D. Campbell, Mr. P. D. H. Chambers, Brigadier H. P. Gardham, Miss Phyllis Hartnoll, Mr. J. C. Howison, Lord Kenyon, the Countess of Longford and Miss Elizabeth Mavor.

NOTE

People and Places. A glance at the theses and articles of present-day scholars, both Asian and European, will show that in spite of all endeavours the transliteration of Indian personal and place names into English is hardly more uniform now than in the eighteenth century. Merely to limit the degree of confusion, so far as Tipu Sultan and his environment is concerned, I have in most cases adopted the system of his most recent Indian biographer, Professor Mohibbul Hasan. The difficulty over place names has been intensified by a reversion to more correct usages since Independence—Srirangapatna for Seringapatam, Tiruchchirappalli for Trichinopoly, and so on—but the familiar anglicised forms seem more appropriate to this book.

Equally, I hope I have not ruffled nationalistic feelings of another sort by the fairly consistent use of the terms 'England' and 'English' rather than 'Britain' and 'British' even in a field where Scots and Irishmen played such forward parts. To Tipu

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Sultan they were all 'the English', and he must be allowed the last word.

Currency. The chief units of coinage which will be met with are the *fanam*, varying somewhat in value from 2d. upwards; the *rupee*, worth about 2s. in the late eighteenth century; and the *pagoda*, 4 rupees or 8s. Thus a lakh (100,000) of rupees represented £10,000 and a *crore* (100 lakhs, i.e. 10 million rupees), £1,000,000. For Tipu's *sultany* fanams, rupees and pagodas, see p. 217.

Prologue

SOME months after the fall of the Bastille, there was published in Paris a pamphlet—one of an enormous flood at that period, of course,—entitled *La Nouvelle Épiphanie, ou La Liberté Adorée de Mages*. It recalls how Voltaire prophesied that Holy Patriotism would engender a daughter upon Reason, and that all barbarous despots would yield her their thrones. The daughter, need one say, was Liberty. The author of the *Épiphanie* depicts her birth in France's 'superb Bethlehem' (Versailles), '*non dans un étable parmi les ânes, mais dans un des plus magnifiques Palais de la contrée*'.

Three Magi hear of the marvellous event, and hasten to abandon their false grandeur, their sceptres and their vainglory. Their names? Louis, Georges—and Tiposaib! Though he has no speaking part in the proceedings, Tipu Sultan of Mysore would surely have been flattered to find himself in triple harness with Louis XVI and George III. The latter, as a matter of history, was the only one of the trio who did not later exhibit himself, however briefly and disastrously, in the role of Citizen King and, as Voltaire foretold, do homage to the Red Cap of Liberty! The very obscurity of this *jeu d'esprit*,¹ and the casual but confident introduction of 'Tiposaib's' name into it, tells more than pages of political analysis. Tipu Sultan, whether deservedly or not, was a world figure.

He did not long remain so. It is only partially a coincidence that the failure of Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian adventure synchronised with the defeat and death in 1799 of France's most conspicuous Asian ally. The two events, taken together, meant that for the first time in half a century India was to have no role in the mounting drama of 'France versus the Rest'. Tipu himself was quickly forgotten by the soldiers and politicians of Europe, and the name of his small but once potent principality in the South Indian hills never had to be flagged in the campaign maps of

¹ It can be found in a British Museum collection of revolutionary pamphlets (8050 CC 8 (8)).

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1800–15, nor banded round the conference tables after Waterloo.

In Britain, of course, Tipu's fame or infamy lingered longer. But even here, there were opposing trends. At Westminster, and at the East India Company's headquarters in the City, any formal rejoicings about the fall of Seringapatam were soon smothered by suspicion of the motives, the ambitions, the expensive dreams of its conqueror, Lord Wellesley. Yet on the demotic level, among the ordinary John Bull patriots of market place and farm and tavern, there was a robust and enduring sense of triumph over the terrible Tiger of Mysore. Beating Tipu might not be quite the same thing as beating Boney, but it was a step in the right direction! We shall observe how this straightforward victorious glee (of a kind this age can never recapture) was nourished by the print-sellers, the pamphleteers and the librettists for the popular stage.

There were more tangible reminders still. Whether Seringapatam 1799 was a great feat of arms—compared, for example, with the somewhat similar campaign of 1791–2—will be part of our enquiry, but it was certainly a very great sack! Scattered up and down the British Isles to this day, in extraordinary profusion, is the loot of Tipu's storehouses and armouries. Many of these treasures were acquired legitimately, under the laws of Prize, or were sent home by the Governor-General as presents for the great. Much else was simply stolen by the excited soldiery on that wild night of May 4th, and is seldom identifiable now. But at Windsor Castle and the Tower of London, in the Victoria and Albert and countless other museums, in clubs and army messes and in a quite remarkable number of private houses, rest labelled and dated relics of Tipu Sultan.

How authentic are they—these helmets and swords and tiger-muzzled guns, these jewels and betel-boxes and suites of furniture, Tipu's turban, Tipu's shoes, Tipu's dressing-gown, his very bed? Well, it depends what you mean by . . . In actual fact, they do mostly derive from Seringapatam and mostly from the Palace and its surroundings, but they were not necessarily the personal accoutrements of Tipu himself. Had this been so, as a caustic friend remarked, the reason why he did not put up a more effective fight on the battlements of his capital might well be that he was carrying thirteen swords at the time.

Borne up by this flood of romantic souvenirs and by the

PROLOGUE

soldiers' tales which lingered round them, the legend of Tipu Sultan remained powerful throughout the nineteenth century, while other heroes and villains came and went. It was 'Tipu! Tipu!' that small boys shouted after the famous reformer, Ram Mohan Roy, when he walked about London in his Bengali costume in the year 1830, and who but 'Tippoo' should be the hero of a children's tiger story written more than half a century later still?¹ But gradually 'Deeds which won the Empire' fell out of fashion, and as that Empire itself dwindled away, a mist of vagueness gathered between British eyes and the whole Indian scene:

Q. What are you writing at the moment?

A. A biography of Tipu Sultan.

Q. All about the Black Hole of Calcutta, I suppose?

A. No.

From this little dialogue, more than once repeated, we can deduce that just enough of the legend lingers to entangle Tipu (a boy of six at the time and 1000 miles from Bengal) in one of the great horror stories of British-Indian history.

To his own countrymen naturally enough, he has been the reverse of this all-purpose monster—rather, a generalised folk hero—yet the historical process has been much the same as in Europe. Men have found less and less room in their minds for the military adventurers who century after century united, tore apart and cobbled together again the diverse regions of the sub-Continent; more and more for India's cultural and religious past, her political and economic present.

Yet I think there are better times ahead for Tipu. As the years since Independence lengthen, it becomes easier, on both sides of the world, to seek without rancour the truth about what a famous book called *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*.² Tipu's part in this was crucial, if only because as long as there existed a power like Mysore, independent, well-armed and

¹ *Tippoo, A Tale of a Tiger*, by William Ralston and C. W. Cole (London, Routledge, 1886). Reissued at later dates by Simpkin Marshall and Frederick Warne, with the authors' names reversed. The Warne edition of 1905 ('new drawings') is an enchantment. I have to thank Mrs. D. Bevan for introducing me to *Tippoo*.

² Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt (London, Macmillan, 1934).

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orientated towards France, there could be no quiet nights for the East India Company's proconsuls, whether pacific like Shore, or expansionist like Wellesley. Was the peril exaggerated? Did the Tiger of Mysore belong to the man-eating or the paper species, or to a hybrid of both? Perhaps he was, after all, a thinking and feeling human being! We shall see.

1

An Empire and its Heirs

ONE way of starting the life-story of a hereditary prince is with the origins and ascent of the dynasty to which he belongs. This does not suit the case of Tipu Sultan. He and his father, Haidar Ali, comprised the whole succession of their house; its annals covered barely half a century, from the rise of Haidar to Tipu's death at Seringapatam in 1799 and his family's exclusion from all further sway in Mysore.

A survey limited to this short span would be almost meaningless, since father and son, in spite of the individual force of their personalities, were very much part of an historical process, and to understand them we must go back into the past. The teasing question is, how far back?

Exploring India's history is rather like sailing by some huge irregular cliff face, composed neither of one uniform substance such as Dover's gleaming chalk, or even of well defined strata, but with all the rocks of all the ages jumbled together as though by a series of seismic shocks. At no level (except the most recent) is it possible to rule a horizontal line and say that before *this* the term 'India' meant one thing; after it, something quite different.

However, there was one upheaval which did affect almost the entire structure. It was not too remote from Tipu's time, and can in fact be loosely linked with the year of his father's birth, 1721. Its origins lay a little further back still, when the fortunes of the Moslem Emperors at Delhi, the Mughuls, took a sudden downward turn.

Perhaps under the influence of Edward Gibbon, or because the human mind has a natural relish for disaster, history has always tended to exert its finest eloquence on the decline and fall of empires rather than on their days of glory. Some indeed have been presented to us in a state of chronic disintegration, so that one marvels that the raw material of so much ruin could be continuously supplied. The great example is Byzantium, sliding downhill century after century, yet found more or less in the same place at the moment of its extinction.

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The Mughuls are a somewhat different instance. The names of their greatest rulers still re-echo, and we look with undiminished awe at the works of art which they created—whether overwhelming like the Taj Mahal, or intimate like their illuminated manuscripts. Yet the images of dilapidation which the word 'Mughul' evokes, especially in British minds, are powerful indeed. Shah Alam II, seventy-six years old in 1803, when General Lake found him sitting blind and helpless under a tattered canopy in the ruins of his palace; Bahadur Shah, eighty-two in 1857, when the Mutiny exhumed him to receive the obeisance of the sepoy and to pass into ultimate exile at Rangoon—such are two Mughuls whose memories linger from one's school days.

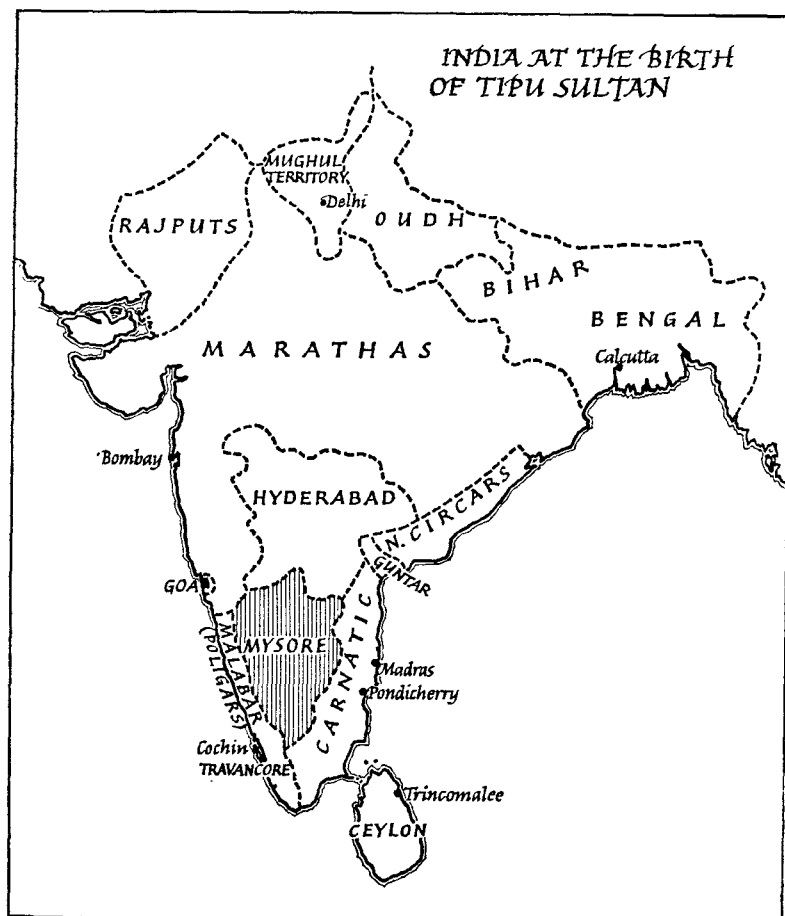
It was round about 1721 that the process which was to create these sad phantoms gathered speed. From 1560 to 1704 the dynasty imposed on Hindostan by the arms of the Turco-Mongol invaders, Timur and Barbar, had prospered under a succession of only four sovereigns, Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjehan and Aurangzeb, whose reigns thus averaged thirty-six years—a record of stability (as well of mighty achievement) rare in any autocratic age, but in India unique. Then the structure fell suddenly to pieces. Fratricidal Emperors, false fleeting puppets and pretenders, appeared and vanished, until by our key year of 1721 they had been succeeded by a ruler, Muhammad Shah, who, though deplorable in every other respect, was destined at least to attain a respectable length of reign and to die in his bed in 1748.

Decline and fall . . . By hindsight, that may seem to be the inevitable outcome of the chaos which followed the death of Aurangzeb. Yet we have been describing an interlude of twelve years only, and had a strong, intelligent contender emerged from among the degenerate sons and grandsons, there is no reason why the 'Mughul period' of Indian history might not have been considerably prolonged. As it was, the divisive instinct raged, and through one of the breaches which it caused the two adventurers, Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, would be able to force their way.

Very broadly speaking, the Mughul Empire was controlled by a hierarchy of viceroys, subservient to the centre when the latter was strong; otherwise, straining towards despotism and defiance. By 1721 the personal and family ambitions of these grandees were subject to only the feeblest restraint. They were all Moslems, of course, and represented a wild mixture of Central Asian races. In

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Bengal, the Mughuls' richest province, a race of hereditary Nawabs had sprung from a Tartar adventurer, while in near-by Oudh the first of the independent rulers was a Persian, whom the Emperor made Governor in 1722. During the same year were laid the foundations of the great state of Hyderabad, in Central India.



MAP 1

Strictly, the Viceroy here was called the Subadar of the Deccan, but Nizam-ul-Mulk, who held the office, established the hereditary nature of his rule so forcibly that within a generation his name became a title borne by his descendants until modern times — 'the Nizams'. Similar tendencies affected the south (Map 1). The

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Sultanates of Golconda and Bijapur, planted on the ruins of the ancient Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar, had been conquered and combined into a single Governorship by Aurangzeb (1686-8). However, this soon split up again into various Nawabships, including those of Sira and Arcot. Tributary to the former was our great arena of future conflict, Mysore, while the latter controlled the south-east coastal strip known to fame as the Carnatic.¹ Their Nawabs were nominally deputies (that is what the word implies) to the ruler of Hyderabad, who was himself, even more nominally, the Deputy of the Emperor. In truth, most of the leading actors on our scene will be deputies at one, two or three removes, and it was among the ruthless achievements of Tipu that, although he never quite escaped that status, he had virtually neutralised it by the time of his downfall, when a seemingly helpless puppet emerged from the property box to replace him!

The most southerly tip of the peninsular was occupied in 1721 by various small feudal states, soon to be wrought by Martanda Varma into the independent kingdom of Travancore, while on the western coast Calicut and Cochin fought for first place under the shadow of spice-seekers from the Levant and Europe to whom Malabar had been a magnetic name since the days of Cleopatra. All these rulers commanded the doubtful loyalty of numberless minor princelings and *poligars*, as the least considerable class of landholders was known.

But the year 1721 was also significant to a turbulent race whose territories and ambitions impinged alike on Delhi, on Hyderabad and on Mysore. The scattered chiefships of the Maratha people in west-central India, not unlike the old Highland clans, had been welded together towards the end of the seventeenth century by the celebrated Hindu champion, Sivaji. There had then been a phase of anarchy, but power finally passed into the hands of the Peshwa, or second Minister, of the Raja of Satara, to whom all the Maratha chiefs were supposedly subservient. This Peshwa, Balaji Viswanath, managed by a now familiar process to convert the office into something like a hereditary kingship. When he died in 1720, his title and power descended to his son, the great soldier-statesman, Baji Rao. The Rajas of Satara then declined into impotence.

¹ The littoral of the Carnatic was usually referred to as the 'Coromandel coast'.

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One more element in the 1721 situation needs to be described—the European merchant-adventurers, Portuguese, Dutch, English and French. The first-named were also the first on the scene (Vasco da Gama made his landfall at Calicut as early as 1498), and for long they dominated Malabar, but directly the Dutch and English moved in their influence dwindled. However, the fact that Goa, the remaining Portuguese settlement on the west coast, and Mysore were adjacent gave the contacts between them a tenuous importance. We shall see the Dutch, potent enough in 1721, also fading out by Tipu's time. From our point of view, their most significant holdings were again to the westward. Here they had forcibly deprived the Portuguese of Cochin, together with the fortified posts of Cranganur and Ayicottah, names which will recur in our story.

As for the English, their East India Company had been founded in 1600, and by 1721, after many an advance and retreat, they had a 'presence' in each of their three great provinces to come. *Madras* ('Fort St. George') had been acquired in 1640 from once mighty Vijayanagar: *Bombay* was part of the dowry of Charles II's Portuguese Queen, Catherine of Braganza; in *Bengal*, the little group of villages on the Hughli river which were destined to become Calcutta ('Fort William'), were not firmly in Company hands until 1670. These were all of course trading posts or 'factories'. There was not as yet even a dream of dominion among the money-minded directors of the Honourable East India Company and their servants.

Nor had the ancient contention of 'French and English' yet infected the Orient. The fact that the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* had furnished itself with a sea base in Mauritius (the 'Ile de France') and, since 1674, with a foothold on the mainland at Pondicherry, only 100 miles south of Madras, was a portent, but no more.

When Haidar Ali, that once obscure soldier of fortune, achieved glory by his sword, it was natural that flattering genealogists should wish to magnify his pedigree and, in particular, to provide him with an origin in Islam's most sacred city, Mecca. This was duly worked out, but as neither Haidar nor his son Tipu, that

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Moslem zealot, seems to have set much store by their ancestry, there is no reason for us to do so either. However, we can start with a holy man—'Punjabi dervish'¹ is perhaps a fair enough phrase. His name was Shaikh Wali Muhammad. He travelled south from Delhi during the first half of the seventeenth century and became attached to a small shrine at Galbarga, eighty miles north-east of Bijapur. Very soon his already grown-up son, Muhammad Ali married the daughter of one of the shrine servants.

When the old Shaikh died this son proceeded to Bijapur, where he and his wife set up house with her seven brothers. And since any tale concerning that particular number of brethren has a fabulous air, the story of what happened when Aurangzeb invaded Bijapur (1686) can best be told in the splendid periods of Kirmani:²

In the vicinity of Kalberga they met and fought a great battle. The ameer of the Hurawal, or advanced guard . . . charged his enemies with the greatest bravery and defeated them; but after fighting gallantly, not less than 700 brave fellows of his party or troop were slain by the arrow or musket; and it was so ordained that the seven brothers, having arrayed their bodies in the glorious jewels of sword-wounds, and opened to their enemies the doors of grief and dismay in this hired mansion the world, at once sped on their way to enjoy the eight gardens of Paradise.

We read further that their luckless sister, inscribing the elegy of her brethren on her broken heart, took to her bed and determined to die. Muhammad seems thereupon to have applied the only possible remedy—up sticks and away—since we next find the whole family established at Colar in north-east Mysore. Muhammad Ali, who died in 1697, would have liked all his four sons to have imitated their grandfather and followed the religious life, but the boys preferred fighting. The fourth is the one who concerns us. His name was Fath Muhammad and his first military command seems to have been under the Nawab of Arcot, who placed him at the head of a dashing band of 5,000 horse, 600 foot

¹ J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III* (Oxford, 1960).

² For Husain Ali Khan Kirmani's *Nishan-i-Ha'ilari* and its continuation dealing with the life of Tipu Sultan, see page 365. The two sections are quoted as *Haydur Naik* and *Tipu Sultan* respectively.

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and fifty rocketeers.¹ But for reasons now obscure, he was soon on the move again. His next stop was Mysore—prophetic region—where a cousin was already in the Raja's service. Then he sold his sword to the Raja of Sira, who gave him a command less than he enjoyed at Arcot, but still substantial, with headquarters at Dodballapur, about twenty-seven miles north of Bangalore.

Fath Muhammad had married in his Arcot days the daughter of a holy man from Tanjore and had a son called Shahbaz. But it was at Dodballapur, in the year 1721, that a son 'of auspicious presage and exalted good fortune was born to him, who from the glory of his person shed splendour on the lap of time'. The sun was in the sign of Aries, and the child was named Haidar Ali Khan.

'Auspicious presage' says Kirmani, yet almost his next sentence hints at astrological forecasts so dire that the baby's relations with one accord recommended that he should be fed with the milk of death and laid to sleep in the cradle of eternity. But his father settled the future of South India otherwise. He kept his little son alive and well nurtured, and fit to cope, even in infancy, with the perils of a wandering life.

They soon came. After a few years Fath Muhammad's patron, the Nawab of Sira, died and there was an armed struggle between his son and a chief who had obtained a title to the governorship. Fath Muhammad remained loyal to the former, and fell with him in battle. Because he had left heavy debts behind, the next heir began to harass his poor widow, not only by the approved methods of the time, but by others apparently of his own invention. According to Kirmani, these included shutting up Shahbaz and the three-year-old Haidar in a large *nagara* or kettle-drum, and beating it.² Their mother had no resource but to seek help from her husband's relative, Haidar Saheb, in Mysore. Haidar Saheb used his influence with Devraj, the Chief Minister, and he

¹ For rocket warfare in eighteenth-century India, see page 140.

² Since writing the above I have observed an MS note by C. P. Brown to his revised translation of R. R. Punganuri's *Memoirs of Hyder and Tippoo* (MSS Eur.D. 292-3, I.O.L.). In Brown's opinion Kirmani wrongly transcribed the word *nagara* (kettledrum) for *nagar* (fort). One reluctantly agrees that this sounds more probable.

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used *his* influence so that the afflicted family was allowed to emigrate to Bangalore and thence to Seringapatam, where the boys were henceforward brought up under their much older cousin's wing.

The military arts were, as one might expect, their favourite study, and when they grew to manhood they, like their father, went off to seek commands in the Carnatic. However, cousin Haidar insisted that their future was in Mysore; they returned, and Shahbaz was given a company under Devraj's younger brother Nanjaraj, now the virtual ruler of the country.

Mysore in the 1730s, at which we have now arrived, had fairly recently undergone changes of a kind to be expected by readers of this chapter. The whole territory, so venerable in culture and religion, had been split up among the usual warring herd of chieftains and poligars when in 1610 the most substantial of them, Raj Wadeyar, got possession of Seringapatam and its dependencies. Other gains preceded and followed this stroke, and by the date of his death (1617), Raj Wadeyar's family, already ancient, were recognised as rulers of a more or less united Mysore. Such were the origins of the dynasty which even in the Republican India of today, provided the State with its Governor up till 1964.

Expansion went on under Raj Wadeyar's successors until in 1699 his masterful great-nephew, Chikka Devraj, received recognition—and an ivory throne—from Aurangzeb himself. Chikka Devraj handed on at his death a territory which in size, though not in its boundaries, was about the same as the 'Mysore State' which was left after all the enlargements and contractions of the Haidar-Tipu era.

Its heartland has always been the plateau, 200 miles square, 'above the Ghats'. These great and precipitous mountain ranges, known as the Western and Eastern Ghats respectively, provide a massive V-shaped framework for the whole of India south of the twentieth parallel. Our concern is with that section of them which, from very near the sea coast at Goa, runs south-west for over 300 miles, diverging gradually inland until it reaches a point just north of Palghaut and Coimbatore. Here it swings round at a sharp angle¹ and continues on a corresponding course to the north-east, but at a much greater distance from the coast than on

¹ The Annamalai Hills form a southward extension separated from the main chain by the Palghaut valley. (See End map.)

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the west side, thus leaving room not only for the Carnatic plain but for an area of broken foothills known as the Baramahal.

At many points the mountain wall rises to over 5,000 ft. above the plains, and except in the neighbourhood of a few passes, whose names will become familiar to us, its woods and precipices were virtually unexploited in the eighteenth century. For example, the southern section, now known as the Nilgiri Hills, played no part in the movements of armies and peoples which Mysorean expansion involved; its ancient inhabitants, the Todas, remained in seclusion until a road from the plains was built and the famous hill station of Ootacamund founded by the British in the 1820s.

In pre-Haidar days, in fact, Mysore did not even control the entire plateau, and on the western flank one of its neighbours, the fiercely independent Coorg, never made a complete submission. But against this, the Wadeyars' ambitions soon carried their armies 'below the Ghats'. Early gains were in the neighbourhood of Coimbatore, where Malabar, Travancore and the Carnatic converge. Then in 1687 came another important stroke, this time on the plateau itself. Bangalore (today the huge industrial capital of the whole region) had been in the possession of the Maratha ruler of the small state of Tanjore. Chikka Devraj made an acceptable bid of three lakhs of rupees for it. At the last minute, however, the cheque had to be made out to Aurangzeb's general Kasim Khan, who stepped in and captured the place when it was already, so to speak, subject to contract and 'in the dismantled state which may be imagined when about to be sold' (Wilks).¹

The northern boundaries of Mysore, where it adjoined the lands of the Marathas and the Nizam, had no such defining physical feature as the Ghats, but in Chikka's time they ran roughly east and west along a line just south of Sira. A landlocked principality, then, but powerfully placed at the centre of one of the most contentious areas of eighteenth-century India.

It was the death of Chikka Devraj in 1705 which led to a situation closely similar to the rise of the Peshwas at Satara. Beginning with the accession of a deaf-and-dumb Raja, power drifted from the hands of a series of weak rulers into those of their ministers. The most potent of these, when Haidar was growing up, were the brothers Devraj and Nanjaraj, already mentioned. They

¹ For Mark Wilks's *Historical Sketches of the South of India in an attempt to trace the History of Mysore*, see page 364.

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held the current Wadeyar, Chamaraja, in complete subjection, and when he did for a moment show symptoms of independence and even installed a Cabinet of his own choosing, Devraj organised a conspiracy which ended with the poor 'pageant'¹ being shipped off to the insalubrious fortress of Chitaldrug to die (1734). Devraj then installed another puppet who, being only five years of age, could be relied upon to give no trouble for the next decade at least.

So that it was as a subject of Devraj and Nanjaraj, rather than of the titular ruler of Mysore, that Haidar Ali rose to greatness.

It is curious, in view of what was to come, and the early maturity of so many eighteenth-century men of action, that Haidar was at least twenty-seven years of age before he had any chance to distinguish himself in the service of his future kingdom. He seems to have passed a casual and irregular youth, his bursts of military enthusiasm alternating with what Wilks calls 'voluptuous riot' and mere wandering and hunting in the woods. However, there came a moment in 1749 when Devraj decided to subdue the poligar of a place called Devanhalli, not far, as it happens, from Haidar's birthplace. His elder brother Shahbaz commanded a troop of horse for this minor exercise in piracy, and Haidar went along as a volunteer. The siege was a muddle which lasted nine months, and ended with the poligar making a dignified retreat to Chickballapur but Haidar's cool nerve caught the attention of Nanjaraj and at the close he was given a command of his own—fifty mounted men and 200 foot.

Within months, even weeks, Haidar was swept into a great struggle which was going on 'below the Ghats' and which in its various phases engrossed him to the end of his life.

Mysore was at this time tributary to the Subadar of the Deccan—in other words to the successor of Nizam-ul-Mulk at Hyderabad. This was his second son, Nasir Jung, and he summoned Nanjaraj to his colours with a Mysore contingent of 15,000 men, Haidar among them. Two interlocking wars of succession were in fact in progress. Nizam-ul-Mulk had left six sons, but (ensuring trouble where he had perhaps tried to avoid it) bequeathed his throne to his daughter's son Muzaffar Jung. Of this young man's miscellany of uncles, the eldest, Ghazi-ud-din, was at Delhi, as Vizier to the Emperor, when their father died, but Nasir

¹ 'Pageant'—the favourite word of contemporary writers for what we would call a puppet ruler.

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Jung was on the spot and seized power. Muzaffar Jung took up arms. He found a natural ally in Chanda Saheb, son-in-law of a former Nawab of the Carnatic, and engaged in his own war of succession there. Chanda's current rival, after a perfect hellbroth of murders and deaths in battle, was a certain Muhammad Ali, destined to come out on top at last, and to stay there, precarious but indestructible, until almost the end of the century.

In truth, none of the claimants either to the Nizamate of Hyderabad or the Nawabship of the Carnatic had a clear title; what distinguished this struggle from a hundred others before it was that for the first time the would-be peaceful traders of two countries situated 10,000 miles away took the field on opposite sides—the English supporting Nasir Jung and Muhammad Ali, the French Muzaffar Jung and Chanda Saheb. As Wilks puts it:

On pretensions as futile as these, two enlightened European nations wasted their ingenuity in volumes of political controversy; rendering homage to virtue and justice in respectively claiming the reputation of supporting the rightful cause . . . without daring to avow the plain and barbarous truth that the whole was a trial of strength . . . in which the English and French had as much right to be principals as any one of the pageants whom they supported. But these nations were at peace, and they could only appear in the contest as the mercenary troops of these polished barbarians.¹

Futile pretensions . . . mercenary troops . . . Yet the struggle cannot be dismissed as ignoble that ranged the talents of a La Bourdonnais, a Dupleix, a Bussy, against those of Stringer Lawrence, Robert Clive and Eyre Coote. It is a commonplace of the history books that the European forces on either side were ludicrously small; when the Comte de Lally landed at Pondicherry in 1758 with 1,100 men of the Irish Regiment at his back, it was reckoned that the whole balance of power in South India had been upset. Largely through his own fault it was not, but it is doubtful whether handfuls of men have ever been deployed with more resolution and with greater effect than in the earlier phases of the Carnatic war.

By contrast, the hordes with whom the French and English forces were brigaded were, on paper at least, enormous. The men

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 261.

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from Mysore, arriving at Arcot early in 1749, found themselves part of a host alleged to be 300,000 strong, though certainly it had far fewer effectives. Nasir Jung's own army was supplemented not only by the Mysoreans, but by 6,000 dubiously useful horsemen of Muhammad Ali and 600 indubitably useful Europeans under Stringer Lawrence, together with a troop of Marathas and contingents from various minor nawabs and poligars. Opposed to them were the forces of Muzaffar Jung and Chanda Saheb, together with a French battalion under the Marquis de Bussy.

The first encounter favoured Nasir Jung; Muzaffar was captured and Chanda fled to Pondicherry. But soon the ambition of the great French Governor Dupleix renewed the struggle and Nasir Jung had to call his armies together once more. Now the wind changed abruptly. The rival forces met near the fortress of Ginghi. Nasir Jung was murdered by a traitor nawab, the French proclaimed Muzaffar as Nizam, and Nasir's ally Muhammad Ali had to fly from the field and (not for the last time) barricade himself in his fortress of Trichinopoly (October 1751).

In these fierce scenes the Mysoreans played a forward part, with Haidar conspicuous, but he also gave a glimpse of another of his talents. He had as personal bodyguard a troop of 3,000 chosen peons¹ from the Beder region who, as Wilks remarks, 'may be characterised as brave and faithful thieves'. Taking a well-chosen station near the treasure tent of their overlord Nasir Jung, they managed to 'liberate' two camels laden with gold, and by the time the confusion had cleared, camels and people were well on their way to Devanhalli, now Haidar's home town. He used at least part of the loot to engage additional retainers and to train them for more ambitious exploits of the same kind.

I do not propose even to summarise here the intrigues and the fighting of the next four years which ended with Dupleix retiring to France a ruined man. Nanjaraj, trying to play too ingenious a game, also returned home somewhat ingloriously; from the Mysoreans' point of view, the chief result was perhaps an undying suspicion of Muhammad Ali, who had promised them Trichinopoly and then wriggled out of his bargain.

¹ Peons—irregular infantry. The term has today been demilitarised, and is applied to almost any unskilled male servant or attendant. The writer's father-in-law, the late J. Chartres Molony, I.C.S., had a favourite definition—'one who wears a belt and is present'.

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Haidar, however, continued to gather laurels and hard cash, and when everyone got back to Mysore in 1755 he was appointed Faujdar or Commandant of the remote south-easterly region of Dindigul, close against the range of hills which separates the Coimbatore country from the province of Madura. His job was to discipline the highly refractory poligars of those parts. Wilks gives us an entertaining account of how he went about it and at the same time shaped and polished his future fiscal weapons.

Haidar could neither read nor write, but he had a retentive brain for figures and was seconded at Dindigul by the arts of a certain Brahmin accountant, Khande Rao.

The consultations of these two persons [says Wilks] produced a system, regularly organised, whereby the plunderers received, besides their direct pay, one half of the booty which was realised; the other half was appropriated by Haidar, under a system of checks which made it impossible to secret any portion of the plunder. Movable property of every description was their object, and . . . they did not hesitate to acquire it by simple theft from friends, when that could be done without suspicion and with more convenience than from enemies. Nothing was unseasonable or unacceptable; from convoys of grain down to the clothes, turbans and earrings of travellers or villagers, whether men, women or children.¹

Wilks goes on to explain Haidar's equally masterly manipulation of the paymaster's department and the quartermaster's stores, and adds:

Some portion of this . . . would enter into the description of most successful Indian chiefs; but no one ever combined with so much skill the perfect attachment of his men with the conversion to his own use of so large a portion of what was issued for their payment.

After this it can be well believed that when Haidar's heart-rending list of casualties in a brush with the poligars brought a staff officer from Nanjaraj bearing congratulations and an allotment of fourteen rupees a month for the wounded, he was greeted not only by the sixty-seven men actually on the sick list, but by 700 more tied up in bandages and 'acting the part to perfection'.

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 351.

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In the management of his civil district Haidar showed an equal address; in fact he became so skilled in taxation matters that, we are assured, he could detect frauds in a return merely by hearing it read.

Having thus cultivated the arts of peace, as well as continuing, with the help of French experts, to study those of war, Haidar was now well qualified for a successful usurpation. But before he achieves it we must introduce, a little belatedly, his successor on the scene and the principle subject of this book.

Boyhood of a Tiger

‘PRAISES and gratitude to God! Who after so much desire and anxiety caused the rose tree to produce the bud of hope, who caused Haydar Ali’s house and fortune to be illumined by the lamp of prosperity, also the night of his desire to be succeeded by the morning of its fulfilment; that is to say, the rising of the bright star of the constellation of power and dignity, in the village of Dewun Hillion the morning of the 20th of Zi, Haj year 1163.’¹

It is, I suppose, fair enough that Kirmani should bring out some of his showiest phrases for the birth of Haidar’s much-wished-for heir, Tipu Sultan, rather than for Haidar’s own obscure nativity. The chroniclers tell us that Haidar was first married, at the usual early age, to the daughter of a *peer* or holy man called Saiyid Shahbaz. They had a daughter, but while the mother was still in childbed she was ‘seized with a dropsy which took away the use of the lower part of her body’. She then, of her own free will, gave her husband leave to take another wife.

This time Haidar turned to a military family. His choice was a lady called Fakhr-un-Nissa, sister of Mir Ali Raza Khan, commander of the fortress of Gurramkonda in the far north-east, and destined to see much hard fighting in Haidar’s cause; he was also the father of one of Tipu’s favourite generals, Qamar-ud-Din. The marriage seems to have taken place about 1745 and for several years was childless. But at length Fakhr-un-Nissa found she was pregnant. According to Kirmani, this was by the mediation of the transcendent merits of the saint Tipu Mustan Oulia, but Mohibbul Hasan² says she merely went on pilgrimage to his shrine during her pregnancy.

In any case, it seems certain that the baby, when duly born, was given the name of ‘Tipu’ in honour of this ‘celebrated

¹ The 20th of Zil-Hijja 1163 in the Moslem Calendar is equivalent to November 20th, 1750. Other writers suggest dates as early as 1747 and as late as 1753 for Tipu’s birth, but Kirmani’s story (*Hydur Naik*, p. 28) is circumstantial. ‘Dewun Hillion’ is of course Devanahalli.

² For *History of Tipu Sultan*, by Mohibbul Hasan, see p. 366.

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abstracted devotee', as Wilks quaintly calls him. Beyond that is an area of extraordinary confusion. It must largely be blamed on later attempts to identify Tipu from the start with one of his favourite symbols, the tiger. It is alleged that the saint came from somewhere on the west coast where the Canarese language was spoken and that *tipu* in Canarese meant *tiger*, or more vaguely, that in conjunction with the word *sultan* (which we shall come to in a minute) it meant 'monarch of the woods'—the tiger again! But Bowring¹ points out that the Canarese for tiger is in fact *huli*, and in any case this would have been an odd name for a saint to adopt. The truth is that we do not know *what*, if anything, the word Tipu means.

Then there is the further mystery of whether Tipu was also given the name 'Sultan' at his birth, or whether it was a later honorific. Wilks tries to settle the question by alleging that the saint himself assumed the royal designation of Shah or Sultan and that 'Tipu Sultan' was taken over in one piece. On the other hand, we do not hear much about 'Sultan' in Tipu's earlier days. The French called him 'Tippoo Saheb' and the English—scholars apart—stuck firmly to something like that for ever afterwards. Tipu himself liked to be hailed in full as 'Tipu Sultan Shah Bahadur'. He also gave the name of Sultan to all his own twelve sons. The point is not quite an idle one, because 'Sultan' at least provided a conveniently kingly designation without raising the tiresome question of what, if anything, was the *title* of Haidar and Tipu as the effective rulers of Mysore.

About the childhood of the young Tipu we know very little. His admirers say that he had a sound scholastic education, and that his military instructor was Ghazi Khan, one of his father's best partisan officers. Those who consider there were defects in his upbringing blame a *maulvi* who was his tutor, and who was more interested in instilling religion than general knowledge. They even quote a story of how Haidar, conducting a belated *viva* and realising the horrid truth, set about not the pupil but the teacher, with a whip.

Whatever the facts, Tipu did show in later life a breadth of intellectual curiosity which could well have been implanted early; he shone less in the mundane departments of handwriting and grammar.

During his boyhood years, (it is easy to forget it), Tipu was not

¹ L. B. Bowring, *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1893).

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a prince at all, just the son of a minor though promising officer. Things seem to have gone along quietly—not for him the ordeal of being beaten up inside a kettledrum at the age of three. In fact his first taste of public life did not come until he was nine years old and his father had taken the decisive steps which were to make him the great Haidar Ali of history and romance.

In the previous chapter we left him at Dindigul, and it must be assumed that little Tipu and his mother were there with him through those years. But in 1756 things suddenly started to happen at Seringapatam, where the 'pageant' Raja Chikka¹ had now reached the age of twenty-seven. He had been judiciously married off to Nanjaraj's daughter, but having, like his luckless predecessor, shown signs of thinking for himself, his father-in-law decided this might be the moment to dispose of him.

The story is obscure, but it would seem that as Devraj was against open violence, Nanjaraj genially suggested to the Rani, then pregnant, that she should poison her husband, on condition that the child in her womb should be allowed to succeed. The proposition was flung back, but it led to a violent quarrel between the brothers. Nanjaraj besieged and stormed the Raja's palace and turned all his servants out into the street with their noses and ears cut off. Devraj quitted Seringapatam in disgust, leaving his brother to cope single-handed with an untimely attack by the Maratha Peshwa, Baji Rao—it took a massive tribute in cash, jewels and territory to buy him off.

Naturally enough, the pay of the Mysore army now fell into arrears, and the result was mutiny. A perfect motive at last for Haidar's long-meditated descent upon the capital! He marched in the company of Devraj with all the troops they could muster. There was a public reconciliation all round and the mutiny was quenched; the fact that Devraj died a week later raised the inevitable mutter of poison, but for once this was probably untrue.

Haidar was now the rising man, and when another Maratha invasion threatened he was made commander-in-chief. From that campaign he came back victorious, and it was the turn of Nanjaraj and his cohorts to retire to the country in disgruntlement.

But before Haidar could make himself supreme in Mysore he had to face and overcome one more crisis. This was a conspiracy incubated by the dowager Rani, who divined that in Haidar the

¹ Usually known as Krishnaraja II.

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house of Wadeyar was merely exchanging one oppressor for another. But the plot also implicated none other than Khande Rao, the financial wizard of Dindigul days. As a Hindu, Khande Rao may well have felt drawn to the old dynasty; at any rate, he began organising treachery with his usual finesse. A force of 6,000 Maratha cavalry was hired, and it was decided to set upon Haidar while most of his army happened to be busy below the Ghats. There was a fight round the walls of Seringapatam (August 12th 1760), which ended with Khande Rao tacitly allowing Haidar to escape by night. This he did by swimming a handful of horsemen and treasure-laden camels over the river Cauvery and making off as hard as he could go; in fact he did not pause till he was safely to ground in Bangalore, some eighty miles away. The rest of his army, his household and his family were left to their fate. Khande Rao at once took charge of Tipu and also of his baby brother, Abdul Karim, born during the battle and never quite a whole personality afterwards. The children were stowed away in the fort at Seringapatam, but seem to have been kindly treated.

Haidar was now back in the *bas fonds*—no troops, no money, no heir. But he was never one to give up. He instantly made contact with the forces serving under one of his brothers-in-law, Mukhdum Ali, in the Arcot district, and prepared to outface Khande Rao. The luck turned his way. On January 7th, 1761, was fought the tremendous battle of Panipat, near Delhi, where a Maratha host was utterly defeated by the Afghan Ahmad Shah Abdali. As it turned out, the lasting effect on Indian history was disproportionately small—the Afghans went home and the Marathas gradually recovered—but for the moment it meant the frantic recall of all Maratha forces, including those in the pay of Khande Rao. Haidar could now meet him on more even terms, and though he lost the first battle he had the audacious notion of making peace with Nanjaraj,¹ whom he had practically deposed, and getting money and men through him. With these reinforcements Khande Rao was quickly battered into submission.

The story is well enough known of how Haidar, pressed by the palace ladies to spare his old servant's life, said he would not only do that, but he would cherish him like his pet parrot. And not long afterwards they had the spectacle of the wretched man being

¹ According to Maistre de la Tour (see p. 29, n. 1.), there had already been secret communication between them.

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fed with rice and milk in an iron cage, from which death did not release him for two years. Maistre de la Tour saw the cage, with Khande Rao's bones in it, still on view at Bangalore in about 1778.

Tipu and his brother were, of course, returned to their father, but Haidar, nervous now about Seringapatam as a family home, made Bangalore the future headquarters of his zenana.

So much for Tipu's first revolution—which turned out to be his last. If, unlike his father, he had had a peaceful time until he was nine, he did not have to wait until he was twenty-eight for his first taste of military glory. As usual, it was one of the tetchy race of poligars who gave him his chance. The year was 1765 and the scene Balam, on the borders of Coorg, whence the poligar in question had been raiding into Seringapatam territory. Haidar, on his way to invade Malabar, stepped aside to punish him and Tipu, scarcely fifteen, went too. The battle developed in the thickly-wooded country of West Mysore, where we shall find father and son operating again so often.

While Haidar was engaged with the main body, Tipu (so Kirmani asserts)¹ carried out an exploit plucky enough from one aspect, not quite gallant from another. He had discovered where the poligar's ladies lay concealed with their escort. Their hide-out was about five or six miles away in a thick dark forest, 'as full of windings and turnings as the curls of a lady's ringlets'. Through these appropriate entanglements the boy Tipu burst with 3,000 armed men at his heels, and hurled himself upon the zenana guards. They, less hardy, cowered beneath the women's skirts or, themselves dressed up as women, fell trembling before the soldiers' swords. 'So the fortunate son of Haidar, rubbing the forehead of gratitude and thanksgiving on the threshold of the only true giver of victory, returned to his father with the honour of the dishonoured—the women—and other valuables . . .'

The scene closed with the poligar striking the hand of grief on the forehead of his pride and being given back his ladies and territory in exchange for fifty camel-loads of treasure and elephants' teeth.

Next, diplomacy. But in order to understand Tipu's first essay in that field, a brief *tour d'horizon* cannot be avoided.

¹ *Hydur Naik*, p. 181.

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Much had happened below the Ghats since Haidar Ali and his fellow-Mysoreans marched to Arcot in 1749 at the behest of Nasir Jung. The series of Carnatic campaigns, in the earlier of which Dupleix and Clive had played their historic roles, ended with the capture of Pondicherry by the English in January 1761, and the surrender of the French commander, Lally. This was also, as it turned out, the end of any serious challenge by France to English expansion in India. Nevertheless we shall continue to see the magnetic force of the French Monarchy and the revolutionary governments which overthrew it influencing Tipu's story, either directly, or through their proconsuls in the East and, by a strange twist, bringing him at last to his death.

By 1761 Muhammad Ali was more or less stabilised in his Nawabship of the *Carnatic* and was free to embark upon that profligate system of borrowing from the craftier servants of the East India Company from which would spring the *cause célèbre* of 'the Nabob of Arcot's debts',¹ destined to agitate Westminster no less than the Madras Presidency during the next quarter-century. Otherwise, his role was that of a more or less faithfully and liability to the English in their struggle with Haidar and Tipu.

Haidar's descent into *Malabar* at the close of 1765 marked the third stage of his involvement with (or aggression against) the west coast powers. The first was his successful assertion of Mysore's rights over those which the Zamorin (ruler) of Calicut exercised in the Palghaut valley, that ever-important east-west pass. Then came an incursion into Northern Malabar (1763) and an alliance with the Raja of Cannanore, the only Moslem ruler on the west coast. Next followed a full-scale invasion of Calicut, which ended with the Zamorin perishing in the flames of his palace and the subsequent resistance, massacre and deportation of his Nair subjects.² Of the other chief principalities, Cochin

¹ Muhammad Ali was referred to indifferently as the Nawab of Arcot and of the Carnatic. Arcot was his capital, but he soon moved to Madras, the seat of power. To colloquial writers such as Innes Munro (see p. 58) he is 'the Nabob Ally Cawn', while in official correspondence we recognise him as 'His Highness Wallah Jah' (Walajah), a title conferred upon him by the Mughul Emperor in 1765.

² For the general dealings of Haidar and Tipu with the Nairs of Malabar, see p. 120. It is alleged that on this occasion 15,000 were sent as prisoners to Mysore and only 200 returned. There is a convenient summary of early

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agreed to pay tribute to Haidar; had Travancore done the same instead of artfully temporising, the story of Haidar's son might have taken a less ominous turn in 1789.

In *Hyderabad*, Muzaffar Jung did not long enjoy the Nizamate which he had assumed under the wing of Dupleix. Within a year (1751) he had been slaughtered by three Pathan nawabs and the French had elevated old Nizam-ul-Mulk's third son, Salabat Jung, in his place. Salabat Jung survived the downfall of Dupleix in 1754, and in fact was able to invade Mysore in search of tribute two years later, just before the Maratha incursion described earlier in this chapter. Eventually he was deposed (June 1762) by Nizam Ali, the fifth of these storm-tossed brothers, though this did not prevent him from being 'recognised' by the Treaty of Paris signed between England and France in February 1763. The Treaty certainly settled Salabat Jung's fate in another sense. Within a few months Nizam Ali had him assassinated.

For all its spreading lands in the Deccan, and its pretensions to tribute from the Carnatic and Mysore, the Nizamate of Hyderabad was never a steady centre of power in the mid-eighteenth century. This was due partly, of course, to the decline of its patrons the French, but more conspicuously to the overweening strength of the *Marathas* on its western flank. By the time 1761 was reached they controlled, under Peshwa leadership, a vast area stretching from the Indus into the far south and, as we have seen, their contest with the Afghans for the control of Delhi, which ended at Panipat, only temporarily halted them. The chief change was that from then on they acted not as a tight Confederacy, but as an association of powerful chiefs, among whom two at least—Scindhia of Gwalior and Holkar of Indore—dealt with the Peshwa as equals.

Since the death of the Emperor Muhammad Shah in 1748, the *Mughul* dynasty at Delhi had been going through its usual torments. The accession of the unfortunate Shah Alam II in 1759 was a crucial event, as he was heavily entangled with the English in *Bengal*, and it was to be long before he would be seen in his capital city.

Mysore/Malabar relations in George Woodcock, *Kerala* (London, Faber, 1967). A valuable narrative, from the Dutch point of view, is in J. van Lohuizen, *The Dutch East India Company and Mysore* (S-Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).

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From the moment that the East India Company acquired the site of Calcutta it was inevitable (though little understood at the time) that there was going to be a shift of authority from the older settlements at Madras and Bombay. A commercial headquarters at the mouth of the Hughli, controlling the import/export trade of the great and rich Gangetic Plain, would in the end wield the economic big stick. With that would go political ascendancy; step by step the Governor of Fort William would swell into the Governor-General of all the Company's Indian domains—with important results to Haider Ali and his son.

But Calcutta's trading hinterland was also the Mughul Empire's most opulent province, Bengal. So here again a clash was certain. If the contest of French and English had been fought out in the Carnatic, it was over Bengal that a British Indian Empire, vaster though shorter-lived than that of the Mughuls, cast its first faint shadow.

As a mercantile city, Calcutta had been an instant success—a population estimated at 15,000 in 1704 had grown to over 100,000 by the middle of the century. The export of textiles—the 'Indian muslins' and 'calicoes' which Georgian ladies treasured—was its staple, and safeguarding this great vested interest one of the Company's chief concerns. The problem became acute in 1756, when the Nawab of Bengal died and was succeeded by his ill-disposed grandson, Siraj-ud-Daula, who almost at once took the offensive against the English. Calcutta was besieged, the unwarlike Governor Drake and almost all the higher officials fled down-river in panic, and there followed the ever-remembered tragedy of the Black Hole.

This brought Robert Clive on the scene, with an expeditionary force from Madras. Calcutta was quickly regained, an understanding was reached with Siraj-ud-Daula's general, Mir Jaffar, and thanks partly to his treachery, the fate of Bengal was decided by Clive at the battle—skirmish rather—of Plassey (June 23rd, 1757). Mir Jaffar became Nawab and Clive Governor of Fort William (i.e. Calcutta).

As Dunbar¹ puts it, 'The revolution which set Mir Jaffar on the throne inaugurated a system of masked Government in the Province. The English had practically conquered Bengal, yet as

¹ Sir George Dunbar Bt., *A History of India* (London, Nicholson & Watson, 1949), Vol. II, pp. 345-6.

BOYHOOD OF A TIGER

representatives of a trading company which had no authority to annex territory, they felt unable to assume administrative control, and were obliged therefore to pretend deference towards an Indian ruler who was really subservient to themselves.'

It is precisely this system of masked Government, of pretended deference, that makes British statecraft in India such an extraordinary study, for partisans and critics alike. The very terms just used sound like conscious and long-continued hypocrisy. Yet England's original trading company, as we saw in Chapter I, had not the remotest intention of founding an empire. It still had none when it took arms to resist the French in the Carnatic, and to make itself safe in Bengal: when it formed successively every species of alliance, covert or open, with the 'country powers', as it called them: when it sometimes persuaded, sometimes bribed and sometimes bullied such powers into granting concessions or carrying out reforms which would smooth the path of trade: when, almost always with genuine reluctance which looked like false reluctance, it took over territories and deposed or mediatised their rulers: and when, 100 years after Plassey, by which time British responsibilities in India had become one of the most important departments of State, it still retained the outward form of a society of merchants.

It was Tipu Sultan's distinction, and in the end his tragedy, that he, almost alone of Indian rulers, never lent himself to any such system of 'masked government', never accepted any subsidy nor even entered into any form of alliance which could possibly compromise the independence of Mysore.

3

Apprentice to Diplomacy and War

ON page 23 there was a hint of Tipu's first diplomatic mission; then we became embroiled in the affairs of the Emperor, the East India Company and the Nawab of Bengal. Now all this comes together. Attempts by Shah Alam II, in concert with the Nawab of Oudh, to assert authority over Bengal during the years following Plassey had all failed. In 1765 he finally recognised the Company's stake in the area by granting it the *diwani*, or right to collect revenue, throughout Bengal and in adjacent Behar and Orissa. This important concession was the work of Clive, who had recently returned to Calcutta as Governor, after several years' absence in England.

The three Presidencies were still, of course, completely autonomous, but Clive's attention was drawn back to his old arena of Madras by the rise of Haidar Ali and the certainty that more and more power was going to be gathered into that strong hand. A careful balance would, therefore, need to be kept between Mysore, the Marathas and the Nizam. As a first step Clive obtained control of the six districts known as the Northern Circars, held by the Nizam from the Emperor and forming almost a land link between the Bengal and Madras Presidencies along the eastern coast. Clive achieved this by getting an imperial grant at the same time as the negotiations over the *diwani* of Bengal. Be it noted, though, for the future, that one of the circars, Guntur, was temporarily excluded as being the *jagir* or fief of Basalat Jung, brother of Ghazi-ud-Din, Nasir Jung, Salabat Jung and Nizam Ali, and the last son of Nizam-ul-Mulk whom we shall need to bring upon this scene.

The management of the Northern Circars was assigned to Madras, and to strengthen its hold upon them the Provincial Government decided to make a formal treaty with Nizam Ali. This was signed at Hyderabad on November 12th, 1766. One of the stipulations was that an English auxiliary force, markedly uncertain in numbers and briefing, was to be put at the disposal of the Nizam 'to settle everything right and proper in the affairs of

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His Highness' Government'. What a commitment, at the very moment when Nizam Ali, in collusion with the Peshwa, was planning to attack Mysore!

The Marathas invaded first, followed at a more leisurely pace by the Nizam, with his English auxiliaries. Haidar was hard-pressed, and in one encounter we have a glimpse of him sitting under a tree, like Henry VI upon his molehill, 'surveying with wild passion the field so favourable to his enemies'. Shrewdly appreciating the strength of the coalition against him, he contrived to buy the Marathas off with thirty-two lakhs of rupees and a small strip of territory.

That accomplished, the next move was an embassy to Hyderabad. It was this conspicuous mission which was chosen for Tipu's diplomatic debut. Mohibbul Hasan says he performed it with tact, but it seems that the real negotiations were carried out at a more experienced level. Leading counsel, so to speak, on the Mysore side was Mahfuz Khan—an interesting choice, since he was actually the elder brother of Muhammad Ali and had, as many thought, a better claim to the Nawabship of the Carnatic.

Once the terms of a treaty had been framed, Tipu came into his own. Maistre de la Tour tells us a remarkable story of how Haidar had been unwilling for his precious son to go to Hyderabad at all, without a strong escort. 'I am afraid,' said he, 'of the cruel and perfidious Nizam; he has assassinated his own brother, will he spare my son?' At best, Haidar thought Tipu might be held to ransom to gain some great concession. However, all went well. We can be sure that, as on all the public occasions of his earlier life, there was an attractive dignity in the short and still slender figure of the young prince, as he led forward his train of presents for the Nizam—five elephants, ten splendid horses, and a load of treasure. Everything was done with the accustomed Mysorean glitter and style. Kirmani² describes Nizam Ali as mounting a balcony, and after admiring the discipline of Tipu's 6,000

¹ *History of Hyder Ali*, by Maistre de la Tour, p. 134. This biography first appeared in English as *History of Ayder Ali Khan, Nabob Bahadur, or New Memoirs concerning the East Indies*, by M. M. D. L. T., General of Ten Thousand in the Army of the Mogol Empire, and formerly Commander-in-Chief of the Artillery of Ayder Ali, and of a body of European troops in the service of that Nabob' (London, J. Johnson, 1784). Page references are to a later, extended edition put out by Thacker in 1855 under the editorship of Tipu's son Prince Ghulam Muhammad.

² *Hydur Naik*, p. 248.

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cavalry, conferring on him a robe of honour and the shawls he himself was wearing. More practically, he promised the dismissal of his English troops.

But the real heart of the treaty which was now signed was an alliance between Haidar and the Nizam to eject Muhammad Ali from the Carnatic and to replace him by his brother Mahfuz Khan; the latter would, however, at once resign in favour of Tipu, who was to be married to his daughter. According to some authorities, the Nizam actually invested Tipu as Nawab during his State visit. We do not hear of the young man laying serious claim to the dignity—or for that matter to Mahfuz Khan's daughter—though in the year 1780 father Haidar announced *himself* as Nawab of the Carnatic! Muhammad Ali was to have the laugh of them all.

The great embassy turned for home, and so it came about that in August 1767, just nine months after the Nizam had signed up with the English, and less than four since his army advanced upon Seringapatam, he and Haidar descended the Ghats as allies at the head of 60,000 men of all arms, and what is usually known as the First Mysore War began.

Tipu's role in the fighting which followed was one for which his exploit at Balam had perhaps prepared him—that of a dashing leader of light horse. But though he was supposed to be exercising command, he was under as close tutelage as on his mission to Hyderabad and his 'staff' (which included his old military tutor, Ghazi Khan), were rigorously briefed to ensure his safety.

While Haidar himself marched and counter-marched against the main English armies under Colonel Joseph Smith, Tipu's task force—cavalry, irregular infantry and a few light guns—laid waste the Arcot country up to the very gates of Madras. By September 28th, he and his horsemen were descried 'scampering about' in the gardens of the Council members' villas round St. Thomas's Mount. Governor Bouchier himself had a narrow escape; he was with Muhammad Ali, Colonel Call and others in the Company's garden house near the beach when Tipu's men galloped up, and he only just managed to get away in a small vessel lying offshore.¹

¹ For this period, see *Vestiges of Old Madras*, ed. H. D. Love (John Murray, for Govt. of India, 1913), Vol. II, p. 596 *et seq.*

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With the precedent of Calcutta 1757 in mind, there is no knowing how far panic might have driven these not very heroic dignitaries had not Colonel Smith given Haidar a severe beating at Tiruvannamalai, about fifty miles inland from Pondicherry, a few days before. Tipu was hastily recalled, a necessary move perhaps, but one which certainly cleared Smith's precarious communications with Madras and the coast. In the midst of the retreating army a strange sight was seen—five *padres* (four monks and a priest) hoisted upon camels and wearing painted silks over their square bonnets against the merciless sun. Haidar had ordered his son to bring away some 'personages of distinction' to be interrogated, and this was the best that Tipu could manage. After five days on camel-back they arrived at Haidar's camp (near the modern Uttankarai) more dead than alive, and no doubt were witnesses of the joyous reunion of father and son.

In this affair of the *padres* we see Haidar exerting the politic toleration which (in contrast to his son) he applied to all matters of religion. Eloy Peixoto¹ tells us that three of them were Portuguese and two French, one of the latter being Father Louis, an Augustinian from Bengal who had merely been on a visit to Madras. As long as they were in Tipu's hands they led a miserable life—a measure of rice and about a halfpenny a day for subsistence, and nowhere to lie down but the ground. Eventually Haidar himself gave them audience. He was gracious, and excused his son's excesses—he was no longer a boy and would not in future be led away by the follies of youth. In fact, if he (Haidar) had known that the *padres* were not Englishmen they would have had very different treatment. And so they were dismissed, with betel and 100 rupees each, and the assurance that their churches were safe from further meddling. They got back to Madras in November.

From October onwards, the monsoon² would normally have

¹ This half-Portuguese adventurer was in the service of Haidar from April 1758 until November 1767 when he went over to the English—apparently on the persuasion of the *padres*. Colonel Smith (so he says) gave him a commission, but he was soon wandering off in vain search of military commands in Ceylon, Malabar, Bengal, Tranquebar, and Pondicherry. Clearly he was mistrusted and in 1769 he returned to Haidar, who took him back with mild enquiries why he had deserted in the first place. He remained with Haidar until 1771. Peixoto's *History of Nawab Haidar Ali Khan Bahadur*, edited by C. P. Brown, is in the India Office Library (MSS Eur. D295).

² Military movements in a southern India which had few roads and fewer

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given both armies an interlude of rest, but by November 10th the restless Haidar was on the move again, with the capture of the stronghold of Ambur, close to the foot of the eastern Ghats, as his objective.

The defence under Captain Calvert was plucky and skilful, and is commemorated by the first 'battle honour' won by the Madras Army—'Ambur' awarded to the 1st Battalion of the 10th Regiment. This gave time for Colonel Smith to raise the siege; Haidar retreated south-west and was brought to bay while making for Vaniyambadi. Tipu's cavalry were stationed on the right wing and can fairly be said to have saved the day with repeated charges, while the English broke the other wing and fiercely engaged Haidar himself in the centre. Finally Tipu swept round and attacked the English rearguard 'like a lion springing on a herd of deer, and sank the boats of their existence in the whirlpool of eternity'.¹

The year ended with honours about even between Haidar and the English, but no honours at all to Nizam Ali, who now distinguished himself by defecting for the second time. His forces had made but a poor showing alongside the Mysoreans, and faced by a probable English (and even a Maratha) invasion of Hyderabad, he simply changed sides again. On February 23rd, 1768 he signed a treaty with Muhammad Ali and the English, by which he acknowledged the former as lawful and independent Nawab of the Carnatic and confirmed the latter in possession of the Northern Circars—always excepting Basalat Jung's Guntur.

Meanwhile Tipu, thoroughly enjoying the military life at the age of seventeen, had been despatched to a new theatre of war. In December 1767 Haidar's recent Malabar conquests had been threatened by a revolt of chieftains, seconded by a strong sea expedition from Bombay. The English fleet's first rendezvous was off Honavar. Lutf Ali Beg, Haidar's local commander, marched

bridges, were very much at the mercy of the seasonal rains associated with the monsoon winds. To make things more difficult for the strategists, the west and east coasts are affected at different seasons; the former receives the south-west monsoon, broadly in the period June/August, the latter the north-east monsoon in October/December. The rivers of south and west Mysore, including the Seringapatam region, are liable to violent spates during and after the south-west monsoon. Northern Mysore is more or less outside both monsoon zones. It is considered that the seasonal monsoon rains have become less marked in recent years.

¹ Kirmani, *Hydur Naik*, p. 259.

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thither with his whole force—whereupon the English sailed on and captured Mangalore. Further successes for them followed, and by the time Tipu and Lutf Ali Beg made contact they realised there was not much they could do on their own. They therefore sat down in front of Mangalore to await the arrival of Haidar with his siege train.

In spite of urgent messages from Tipu, this took a little time. By April, Haidar was at his western stronghold of Bednur, but feeling that his numbers would still not be enough to overawe the English, sent to the local Governors and Killedars (fortress commanders) to recruit a stage army of 20,000 peasants. Armed with dummy muskets of ebony, and with a black, white or yellow flag flying over every 1,000 men, they marched upon Mangalore.¹ This Birnam Wood technique completely deceived the English commander—more interestingly, it seems also to have misled the perspicacious Colonel Wilks who, writing years after the event, describes the ‘overwhelming mass’ of the united army which appeared before Mangalore at the beginning of May.² In any case, the display was more than enough for the garrison of forty-one gunners, 200 European infantry and 1,200 sepoy. After a smart raid on their batteries by Tipu, the civilian and military officials in charge decided that it would be useless to resist further. They scuttled aboard ship, leaving their sick, their artillery and their stores behind—‘an impression disgraceful to the British arms’ was the comment of the stern Colonel Smith.

Likewise abandoned to their fate were a number of local levies—invariably the victims of Haidar Ali’s vengeance. But not long afterwards a party of them, like reproachful ghosts, turned up at Tellicherry with their noses³ and ears cut off. The Chief Factor

¹ Kirmani, *Hydur Naik*, pp. 268–9.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 59.

³ ‘Their (the Mysoreans’) custom is not to kill but to cut off the noses with the upper lips of their enemies, for which they carry an iron instrument with which they do it very dexterously, and carry away all the noses and lips they despoyle their enemies of, for which they are rewarded by the Naik of Mysore according to their number, and the reward is the greater, if the beard appear on the upper lip.—*Madras Government Consultation Book*, 1679.

If, as is possible, this barbarous form of mutilation was introduced into India by its Turco-Mongol invaders, it may well have derived from Byzantium, where it enjoyed a horrid popularity. To the Emperor Constantine V ‘a plateful of noses’ was a welcome offering, says Gibbon.

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thought it would have been better for the poor wretches if Haidar had cut off their heads.

Other coastal places were also yielded up, and Haidar was able peacefully to reascend the Ghats before the monsoon. He regrouped at Bednur, where he had an enjoyable time dealing with the local landowners, whom he suspected of partiality to the English cause. Enormous fines were obviously more useful to him than sentences of death, and as the list was read out those whose names appeared on it were, as Wilks dryly expresses it, 'handed over to the torture department for the realisation of the amount'.

It may be wondered what the English forces in the Carnatic were doing while the firm of Haidar and Son was so fully engaged on the Malabar coast. The answer is—very little. Among other things, their intelligence system was so poor that it was three months before they learnt of the westward movement of the main Mysore army. At length, however, they took the field again. It was announced that this time the Commander-in-Chief (Colonel Smith) would be accompanied by two Council members as Field Deputies and, 'so that no source of distraction, inefficiency and encumbrance might be wanting', Muhammad Ali was to go along too in order to collect the revenue of the conquered territories. The latter were prudently reckoned to exclude Bangalore and Seringapatam! To complete this picture of the Madras Presidency in battle array, one of the Field Deputies, John Call, held the contract for victualling and transporting the armies, the profits being shared by all his fellow Council members except the Governor (Bourchier).

The outcome can be quickly told. Haidar had always to be cautious when confronted by Joseph Smith (superseded for a time, with disastrous results, at the height of the struggle), but on the whole the Mysoreans retained the initiative throughout the long, indecisive campaign. Even after the English, having surmounted the Eastern Ghats below Budikottai, had got within thirty miles of Tipu's headquarters at Bangalore, he and his light forces seem to have played a subsidiary role, and it is to be observed that when Haidar planned a decisive thrust for which they might have been suitable, he would entrust it to no one but himself.

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Assembling a column of 6,000 picked cavalry and a mere handful of foot (two companies of 100 men each, the commander of one of them assured Wilks), he set off for Madras from a point about 140 miles south. He and his horsemen covered the distance in three and a half days, with the infantry only one day's march behind. By March 29th, the outskirts of the city were in Haidar's hands, and from this point of vantage he invited the Governor to discuss a truce. Just to show which side was negotiating from strength, Haidar, not the Governor, nominated the English delegate, the second Council member, Josias du Pre! Though there had been intermittent peace talks previously, his letter to du Pre was pleasantly déagé: 'I have been desirous of seeing you this long time, and being now arrived in your neighbourhood have wrote to the Governor to send you hither to carry on a negotiation of peace.'¹

The terms of the subsequent Treaty of Madras included a return to the *status quo ante* so far as territory was concerned. More pregnant for the future was a clause whereby mutual assistance was pledged in the event of an attack on either party. One can only gape at the fecklessness—there is no other term—with which the Company's representatives in eighteenth-century India entered, time and again, into that kind of commitment to princes who were quite certain to be assailed sooner or later by enemies against whom the English had not the slightest wish to wage war.

In this instance, the odious choice between an unwanted military adventure and a breach of faith was not long delayed.

J. T. Wheeler, author of *Madras in the Olden Time*,² has a quaint remark about the history of the Moslem Empire in India. Describing it as 'the driest in the world . . . as heavy as lead', he adds that 'until some historical romancer can be found with sufficient boldness to leave out all the wars, all the geography and all the proper names, and to confine himself to "Arabian Nights"-like stories of love, adventures, court scandal, etc., the history of Delhi will be a blank to the general reader'.³

¹ *Vestiges*, Vol. II, p. 598.

² Madras, Higginbotham, 1861.

³ *Madras in the Olden Time*, p. 13.

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This sounds most subversive, but it makes a kind of sense. An austere modern historian, while being properly shocked by the second half of the sentence, might well endorse the first. Fewer battles, fewer names of generals, fewer maps of campaigns, he would demand; more economics, more social history, more succulent statistics of agricultural output.

To be readable, a history of Tipu's Mysore, no less than of the Mughul Empire, must make concessions both to the romantic and the scientific schools. But I am afraid that war will always occupy the foreground. Worse, it is a war on a constantly shifting basis, in which partners change into enemies overnight and new theatres open just when the old seem to have reached stability—a recital which, in detail, can truly be the driest in the world. Such detail I shall omit, except where it helps us directly to understand the works and days of Tipu Sultan.

For the present, more violent action is unavoidable. Hardly had Haidar returned from his negotiations before Madras than he found himself facing a further incursion by the Marathas. This was, as usual, in support of the Peshwa's claim—getting thinner with every step in Haidar's onward march—to tribute from Mysore. Inevitably, Haidar asked Madras for the support pledged in their recent Treaty. The Council prevaricated. Knowing that gratuitous military adventures were looked upon with high displeasure at Westminster as well as at East India House in Leadenhall Street, they used the excuse that the Company was at that moment sending out three Commissioners to review, among other things, its whole relationship with the Indian rulers. (The Madras Council could not know that the *Aurora* East Indiaman, after taking the Commissioners aboard at Portsmouth on September 26th, 1769, would never be heard of again.)

There was a further complication. During 1768 one John Macpherson¹ turned up in London on a mission from Muhammad Ali. This resourceful Scotsman had ingratiated himself with the Nawab partly by magic lantern shows and other scientific delights, and partly by judicious name-dropping. Was he not hand-in-glove with William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, foremost among British statesmen? The Nawab was impressed, and thought he saw a way

¹ We shall meet him again—as acting Governor-General of India!—in Chapter 9.

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of by-passing the Madras Government. Accordingly, with £3,000 in his pocket for 'presents', Macpherson took a working passage home as purser of the *Lord Mansfield*. His adventures in London (where he found that Chatham had in fact been superseded by the Duke of Grafton) cannot be detailed here—one of the most crisply diverting accounts is in Thornton¹—but by P.R. methods worthy of any modern lobbyist, he managed to convince his hearers that the Nawab was a much put-upon Prince and one whom they would do well to cultivate. The Ministers' response was extraordinary. They took advantage of a request by the Company for a naval force to give the commander of it, Sir John Lindsay, the additional secret role of Plenipotentiary at Moham-mad Ali's court.

The Nawab had already been urging the Madras Council not merely to refuse Haidar's call for help against the Marathas, but to side actively with the latter. When Lindsay arrived (to the Council it was as though he had dropped from the moon), he gave his full support to the Nawab, and though the Council stood firm in its neutrality, the effect of all this on Haidar can be imagined. To him, the refusal of aid was a rebuff, if not a treachery. While his inmost thoughts cannot be plumbed now, it does seem that he had a considerable respect, and perhaps some liking, for the English. Even when (as he saw it) they let him down, he continued to regard them, with all their dangerous potentialities, as possible allies rather than as inveterate foes. It was quite different with Tipu. He grew up fighting the English—they were in fact his hereditary enemies, which had not been the case with Haidar. Superimposed on this was Tipu's concept of the *Jehad*, the Holy War against the infidel, which we shall see spurring him on when he in turn becomes supreme ruler of Mysore.

Meanwhile, Haidar and his son had to stave off the fourth Maratha invasion in twelve years without English help. This time the Mysoreans decided on a scorched earth policy, and to Tipu was assigned the unpopular job of poisoning wells, setting fire to crops

¹ Edward Thornton, *History of the English Empire in India* (London, W. H. Allen, 1842), Vol. II, pp. 19–26. He makes use of a narrative by Macpherson himself.

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and emptying villages of their inhabitants. If Maistre de la Tour¹ is to be believed, the latter got a surprisingly considerate deal on such occasions; they stumped cheerfully off to Seringapatam, where they received immediate payment for the loss of their effects, were settled in special refugee zones and provided with cut-price rations.

Next, Tipu moved on to Bednur, to intercept Maratha convoys coming from Poona, but in February of the next year (1770) he was recalled to help his father, hard-pressed by the largest army the Marathas had ever sent against him. Nor was the pressure greatly eased by the illness which compelled the Peshwa, Madhav Rao, to retire to Poona during May, since his maternal uncle, Trimbak Rao, who took over command, showed a comparable military talent.

As the months went by large areas of northern and eastern Mysore were overrun. Nevertheless, Haidar got together a substantial force and marched against Trimbak in the neighbourhood of Savandurga, one of the strongest of those 'droogs' or hill forts of central Mysore which were to feature so often in the story of his son Tipu. The latter now had his first taste of the mortal dangers as well as the stirring delights of the soldier's trade.

The opposing armies met in a pass leading to the ancient Hindu shrine of Melukote. Haidar chose an apparently strong position, but the Marathas occupied a hill on his flank within artillery range. From here they kept up what Wilks calls a 'teasing cannonade conducted in the usual Maratha style of withdrawing the guns every night and bringing them forward again at eight o'clock the next morning'.² However 'slovenly' the method, the result was most unnerving, and meanwhile rocket men, creeping through the woods, added their unpredictable harassment. After eight days of this (March 5th, 1771) Haidar decided to retreat on Seringapatam, some twenty-two miles away.

The army set off at dusk leaving behind only a token force—its duty was to follow at midnight after sounding the *noubut* ('a stunning discord of enormous kettledrums and harsh wind instruments which marked the normal hours of relief'). The whole awkward operation might have succeeded had not the commander

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

² Wilks's version of this episode is in Vol. II, p. 139 *et seq.*; Kirmani's in *Hydur Naik*, p. 188 *et seq.*

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of the advance-guard loosed off at an imaginary enemy after he had only gone four miles. This alerted the Marathas and also warned Haidar that he could not hope to bring his forces away undetected. To add to the confusion, he himself had chosen this of all evenings to get drunk. He sent frantically for Tipu, who was supposed to escort the baggage but was wandering hopelessly about in the woods. When he turned up at dawn, says Wilks,

Haidar not only accosted him in a strain of the lowest scurrility but in a paroxysm of brutal drunken rage, seized a large cane from the hand of one of his attendants, and gave the heir apparent a most unroyal and literally most unmerciful beating. Tipu, as soon as he durst, withdrew from his father's rage and at the head of his division, dashing on the ground his turban and sword, 'My father,' said he, 'may fight his own battle, for I swear by Allah and his Prophet that I draw no sword to-day.' He kept his oath, and the division was commanded by Yaseen Khan.

Mohibbul Hasan discounts the legend of the beating on the ground that there is no supporting evidence. Wilks himself perhaps expected to be disbelieved, since he adds the persuasive footnote, 'I have conversed with persons who saw his (Tipu's) back in a shocking state upwards of a week afterwards'. But this is still not convincing, because one of the few psychological facts which have come down to us about Tipu was his extreme personal modesty. If—at any rate in later life—he never exposed any part of his person even in the bath, is it very probable that in his proud young days he would have gone around displaying his disgraced and riven back to all and sundry?

However, that was not the last, or worst, of the story. Huddled into an unwieldy square, the Mysore army (probably some 35,000 strong), stumbled on towards Seringapatam under constant artillery and rocket fire. When they were still eleven miles short of the capital, their formation completely collapsed and the Maratha cavalry charged. 'The rest was a scene of unresisting slaughter; and, happily for Haidar, of promiscuous plunder; with which everyone was too much occupied to think of straggling fugitives.' Haidar slipped away somehow, one of his grooms brought him a horse and he galloped off to Seringapatam. Tipu's resource was disguise. Throwing off his coat of cloth of gold, he got himself up as a travelling mendicant and set out on foot with

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one companion. Meanwhile Haidar, having given him up for lost, refused to enter the city, and with many expressions of grief retired to a small mosque on the far side of the Cauvery river.

Thus Wilks. Kirmani's version is slightly different. He suggests that it was not until the second day of the retreat that Haidar let go the thread of caution after eating and drinking what was presented to him (a respectful hint at that carouse?), and the Maratha ambush ensued. Kirmani also says that, having made all arrangements with the Killedar of Seringapatam to receive his son, he crossed over to the mosque 'and there at time of evening prayer came Tipu, attended by only two or three horsemen, in the garb of Maratha *pindaris* [irregular cavalry]'. Haidar must have been greatly moved, because this parsimonious man at once threw open the door of the Treasury and gave to every horse or foot soldier who escaped from the disaster two handfuls of gold, and to every man who brought away his horse and equipment five handfuls and a dress of honour.

Kirmanī also supplies the curious detail that Yaseen Khan (the same who took over from Tipu during the débâcle) deliberately surrendered to Trimbak Rao under the pretence of being Haidar, and maintained the deception¹ for as long as ten days while the Maratha chieftain flattered him and tried to persuade him to send for Tipu and the rest of his family. Meanwhile the invading forces, instead of pushing on to Seringapatam, devoted themselves wholeheartedly to plunder. When they did arrive, their siege operations were perfunctory. The Mysoreans sallied out to harass them and on one occasion Tipu came near to capturing Trimbak himself bathing in the river below the Lal Bagh gardens. As it was, he ambushed a big Maratha force and took 2,000 prisoners while Trimbak, 'his clothes wet and his lips dry', scrambled to safety. After thirty-three days the siege was raised.

¹ Helped by the fact that he was the only man in Mysore who presumed to imitate Haidar by having his beard and whiskers shaved off.

4

The Tipu Legend takes Root

THE to-and-fro of war ended temporarily in July 1772 with a treaty much to the Marathas' advantage, and there is no knowing how far their ascendancy might have soared but that a few months later the Peshwa died. He left no son and was succeeded by his brother Narayana Rao. On August 30th, 1773 the new Peshwa died also—almost certainly murdered at the instigation of his ambitious uncle, Raghunath Rao. Unluckily for the latter, the dead man's widow produced a posthumous heir who, in spite of various stories of the 'warming pan' variety, was recognised by a Court party headed by the Minister Nana Fadnavis, who now comes into great prominence.

Taking advantage of the conflict which ensued, Haidar (who had been filling in time by ruthlessly enforcing a dubious claim to suzerainty over Coorg), gave Tipu the assignment of regaining as much as he could of the territories ceded to the Marathas. The young general made such a good start at this that early in 1774 Haidar decided that everyone had earned an interlude from fighting and that now would be a suitable moment to arrange the marriage of his son and heir. Tipu was already twenty-three years of age, so by Asiatic standards the ceremony was well overdue.

Looking round for a worthy bride, Haidar fixed on a Navayet¹ lady, daughter of the Imam Saheb Bakshi of Arcot. But because of unpleasant rumours about the bride's family, noisy objections were raised by 'the ladies of the curtain of chastity and purity'—in other words Haidar's womenfolk. Eventually Tipu himself chose Ruqayya Banu, daughter of Lala Miam, a general who had died, fighting bravely, at Melukote, and sister of a commander destined for even greater fame, Burhan-ud-din. Haidar still cavilled and finally Tipu was married to both ladies the same evening. It is generally accepted that the marriage to the Imam's daughter was in name only, whereas Ruqayya Banu was the mother of one or more of Tipu's numerous children (for the

¹ Navayets—a group of South Indian Moslems of ancient Persian Gulf origin.

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obscure question of their female descent see pp. 185, 209-10).

For the time being, however, all was feasting and rejoicing. The streets and markets of Seringapatam were ornamented like the nuptial chamber, dancing girls lovely as Venus excited the envy of the ever-blossoming rose garden, and during the whole time the inhabitants of the city never dried their hands from eating and drinking.

The next few years are something of a blank in Tipu's history, but we know enough to be sure that he did not spend much of them cultivating the domestic virtues in the company of his wives. Between 1774 and 1778 he and Haidar were constantly in action, strengthening and extending the boundaries of the kingdom of Mysore, particularly where it adjoined the Maratha and Hyderabad territories, until by 1778 its north-west frontier lay along the river Krishna.

The moment was near, however, when Tipu's attention would be swung back to the English, and his future attitude to them, and theirs to him, would be decisively shaped. A quadruple alliance—the Nizam, the Marathas, the French and Mysore—was brewing. Some provocation had been given by all three English Presidencies, but while Bombay and Bengal were partly to blame, the major political errors were made by Madras. The course of events was this:

1. In 1778 France intervened in the American War of Independence on the side of the colonists, and as part of the subsequent struggle, the British attacked the French possessions in India. The fall of Pondicherry (October 1778) did not greatly concern Haidar, but he took great umbrage when the small settlement of Mahé¹ on the West coast was similarly seized, since it adjoined his Malabar conquests and was one of his principal sources of European arms.

2. Simultaneously, Madras decided to assume control of Guntur, which, it will be remembered, had been excluded from the take-over of the Northern Circars in 1766. The presence there of a French force under Lally² had long caused uneasiness. Basalat

¹ Originally Mayyazhi, but renamed by the French in honour of Bertrand Mahé de La Bourdonnais. As a young captain he led the assault at its capture in 1725.

² Savoyard soldier of fortune, and no relation of the famous Comte de Lally, whose name he seems to have adopted—his own was de la Sale. Major in the

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Jung now agreed to dismiss the French and to cede Guntur to Madras in exchange for military aid. This was highly vexatious to his brother the Nizam, who had not been consulted. Moreover, the English contrived to incense Haidar as well by this operation—they not only marched their forces through part of his territory without a by-your-leave, but they immediately leased Guntur to his *bête noire*, Muhammad Ali of the Carnatic!

3. Bombay and Bengal got on the wrong side of the Marathas by supporting Ragunath Rao against the infant Peshwa, whose cause was being backed by the dominant party at Poona, led by Nana Fadnavis.

The result of all this was that in July 1780, before their other partners had got into motion, Haidar and Tipu swept down into the Carnatic with an army little short of 100,000. Affairs at Madras were at a low ebb. The administration had been going through one crisis after another, including the fantastic episode in 1776 when the Governor, Lord Pigot, was arrested by his own Council and died in confinement. There was hardly any money in the Treasury—£440 in February 1780, says Sheik Ali!¹ Nobody could even agree whether the military command should be given to Sir Hector Munro, the victor of Buxar,² or to Lord Macleod, who had recently come out at the head of his own 73rd (Highland) Regiment. Finally Munro was appointed, and took the dubious decision³ to concentrate his forces in an exposed position at Conjeeveram, about thirty-five miles south-west of Madras.

Among the detachments ordered to rendezvous there was one under Lieutenant-Colonel William Baillie, marching south from Guntur. This force, numbering a little under 3,000 men (including 400 Europeans), reached the river Kortalaiyar (End-map) on August 25th, but instead of crossing at once, encamped on the north side. The river then rose suddenly, and Baillie found he

French Swiss Corps (1775); captured by the English and exchanged. After short spells with Basalat Jung and the Nizam, Lally took service under Haidar Ali, to whom, and even more to Tipu, he proved invaluable.

¹ *English Relation with Haidar Ali*, by H. Sheik Ali (Mysore, Rao and Raghavan, 1963), p. 225. An important thesis.

² The decisive battle (Oct. 23rd, 1764), in which the forces of the Bengal Presidency defeated the combined armies of Mir Kassim (the former Nawab), the ruler of Oudh and the Emperor Shah Alam II.

³ It was forced on him, some say, by Muhammad Ali, who wanted Arcot to be covered.

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could not get over until September 3rd, thus allowing ample time for Haidar to detach Tipu to harass him. There was a sharp engagement on the 6th, and Tipu warned his father that he could not hope to defeat Baillie without reinforcements. These Haidar sent at once. Munro also reinforced Baillie with 1,000 men under Colonel Fletcher. Baillie then set off towards Conjeeveram, but when only nine miles away took the fatal decision to halt for the night instead of pressing on.

The next morning Baillie's little band was attacked by the combined armies of Tipu, Lally, and Haidar himself, who had rushed to the scene. This resistance was heroic, but the English ranks were broken, and Baillie had no choice but to display a flag of truce. By the time the slaughter ended—several eye-witnesses say it was only stopped by the intervention of Haidar's French staff—thirty-six out of eighty-six European officers had been killed and the remaining fifty were prisoners of Haidar. They included thirty-four wounded, one of whom was Colonel Baillie. Altogether 250 prisoners were taken—all the rest were killed or scattered.

The battle of Pollilur, as it is usually called, was the worst disaster the British arms had so far suffered in India, and the blame for it has been argued threadbare. Apart from the mistakes already mentioned, Munro was almost certainly at fault in remaining at Conjeeveram on the 8th to safeguard his stores, and sending Fletcher's detachment to Baillie instead of making the junction himself; still more so, in refusing to believe that Baillie was in mortal danger, and failing to march to the sound of the guns when he knew the battle was joined. In the end, of course, he had to abandon his precious stores, throw his guns into the Conjeeveram tank, and make a desperate march back to Madras. It was only twenty days since he had set out, 'but within that brief space', exclaims Thornton, 'how much of misconduct and of suffering, of disaster and disgrace, had been crowded!'¹

As we shall see, the battle of Pollilur was not decisive in the military sense, but its effect on one man at least—Tipu Sultan—was indelible. In the first place, he had played the major role in a spectacular victory over the English, and he never forgot that. He liked to imagine later generals 'suffering the fate of Baillie', recorded an apparition of one of the latter's officers 'with a

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 241.

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countenance like a hog¹ and either he or his father made the whole episode the subject of a famous series of wall paintings in the Daria Daulat pavilion at Seringapatam (Plate 2b). He thus acquired a self-confidence—not to say arrogance—in his dealings with the English which only deserted him in the closing scenes of his life.

Again, the dismay which followed Pollilur meant that the phase of conflict between weak and bumbling Presidency governments and the vigorous autocracy of Mysore was much shortened. Five years before, the British Parliament had passed a Regulating Act to bring order into the affairs of the East India Company. The key clause was one which for the first time created a Governor-General of Bengal, who also had control over the other Presidencies. The nature of that control was at first left vague and there was the further weakness that the Governor-General was only one of a Council of five members, who were entitled to decide everything by a majority, subject only to his casting vote. But the first Governor-General was named in the Act, and the name was Warren Hastings. That, given the comparative financial and military strength of Bengal, indicated decisively the source from which the will, the money and the men to retrieve Baillie's disaster would come. There was no turning back, and for the rest of Tipu's life his ultimate opponents were a succession of Governors-General, wearing the full authority of the East India Company and, to a growing extent, of the British Government itself.

But the third consequence of Pollilur was the one which made Tipu something more than a local figure, and which justifies a re-appraisal of him today. It was the start of his reputation as a 'sanguinary tyrant', gloomy, fanatical and cruel, the very type of Oriental despotism. Whether or not he was anything like this—and we shall be coming up against the question again and again—the linking of it with the Baillie episode has been strangely capricious.

Tipu's evil repute rests in great part on the reminiscences of a group of English soldiers and sailors who were his prisoners. Many exist in print or manuscript, but three which have made a lasting impression are the *Narrative of the Imprisonment and Sufferings of our Officers and Soldiers by an Officer of Colonel Baillie's*

¹ Appendix XXV to Beatson's *Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultan* (see p. 277, n.).

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Detachment,¹ appended to some anonymous *Memoirs of the Late War in Asia* and published by John Murray in 1788; John Bristow's *Narrative of Suffering during Ten years of Captivity with Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan*, which first appeared in Calcutta and was reprinted by Murray in 1794; and *The Captivity, Sufferings and Escape of James Scurry, Seaman, written by Himself*, which Henry Fisher brought out in London in 1824. Selections from these were edited by A. W. Lawrence and published in 1929 under the significant title of *Captives of Tipu*.² The picture they give of the tensions, the miseries and sometimes the absurdities of their ordeal is vivid in the extreme, and we shall have to take it frequently into account.

Yet these men were only 'Captives of Tipu' in the sense that the longest stretches of their imprisonment were during his reign—they were all taken prisoner by Haidar, and in so far as Tipu figures personally in their story, it is in a placatory role.

What actually happened after Pollilur? The classic description is that with which the *Narrative of an Officer* opens, as with a thunder-clap:

While the enemy's horse and elephants marched again and again in barbarian triumph over the field of battle, the wounded and bleeding English, who were not instantly trodden to death by the feet of those animals, lingered out a miserable existence, exposed in the day to the burning rays of a vertical sun, and in the night to the ravages of foxes, jackals and tigers, allured to that horrid scene by the scent of human blood. Many officers, as well as privates, stripped of all they had, miserably perished; others, rising, as it were, from the dead, after an incredible loss of blood, which produced for the time the most perfect insensibility and stupefaction, found means to rejoin their friends in chains, with whom they were destined to share, for years, the horrors of the gloomy jail. . . .

Then comes a formidable set-piece:

Hyder Ally, seated in a chair in his tent, enjoyed at Damul, six miles from the scene of action, the sight of his prisoners, and the heads of the slain. Colonel Baillie with several other officers, who

¹ Referred to in future as *The Narrative of an Officer*. The latter's identity has never been established; he may be a 'composite'.

² London, Jonathan Cape, 'The Traveller's Library'.

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like himself were inhumanly wounded, were carried to his camp. The vehicle on which the Colonel was borne was a cannon. While these unfortunate gentlemen lay on the ground in the open air, heads of their unfortunate friends were, from time to time, presented to the conqueror; some of them even by English officers, who were forced to perform this inhuman service. One English gentleman, in particular, was forced to carry two heads of his countrymen, which proved to be Captain Phillips and Doctor Wilson.

But soon after the arrival of the English officers, Hyder, touched by a latent spark of humanity, ordered the practice of bringing heads before him, while the English gentlemen were present, to be discontinued and the heads of Captain Phillips and Doctor Wilson he ordered to be removed.

A dooley was sent to the field of battle in search of Colonel Fletcher, but could not find him. The colonel's head was afterwards carried to the barbarian's camp . . . For every European head that was brought to the barbarian by any of his own people, who were volunteers in that service, a premium was given of five rupees; for every European brought alive, ten rupees.

We next read how the prisoners' torments were alleviated by the 'superior humanity' of the French Officers in Haidar's service — M. Goddard who visited Colonel Baillie the same evening: fifteen officers who saluted the prisoners 'with the compliment of the hat'; and above all Captain Pimoran, of the Regiment of Lorraine, who arrived with M. Lally's best respects and, more practically, a supply of clothes, wine, bread, and the services of two French surgeons.

The other source of consolation was Tipu Sultan! We are told that the officers assigned to his camp were kindly treated — were invited into his tent and given biscuits and five pagodas each. When Captain Monteath begged to be allowed to send a letter to his wife in Madras, it was at once arranged. We shall show good reasons for not swallowing this and other 'narratives' whole, but on the present point we have the solid testimony of one of the most notable of all the Pollilur prisoners. This was Captain David Baird, of Lord Macleod's Regiment, destined, as Major-General Baird, to lead the assault on Seringapatam in 1799 and to stand with the body of Tipu Sultan at his feet.

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After Baillie's surrender, Baird tried to get to Monro's camp, but was captured by Lally and handed over to Haidar. The prisoners were led away into captivity handcuffed two and two (*'I pity the man who was chained to oor Davie'*, said his mother, when the news reached Haddingtonshire), and during the first day's march Tipu came up with them in his palanquin. Baird is witness¹ that he spoke to Baillie 'in the handsomest manner', complimenting him on his gallantry and assuring him that his defeat was but the fortune of war. Tipu even went so far as to invite Baillie, if he found any cause for complaint, to send it to *him*, and the grievance, whatever it was, would be adjusted.

So far, top marks to Tipu. But Baird goes on to say that he must have known that nothing of the sort was in his power, nor did he make any further contact with the prisoners or take the slightest interest in them, either during his father's lifetime or when they were completely within his control.

It would therefore seem—and the experience of Brathwaite's officers captured in February 1782 (see p. 57) reinforces this—that Tipu did offer those immediately under his hand the courtesies of war, but then abandoned them to whatever brutalities and privations might be in store; the graver question of whether he was in any way responsible for the deaths in prison of such men as Colonel Baillie and General Mathews will be discussed in its place. What is clear is that the capture of so many English soldiers in lurid circumstances at Pollilur, and the tale of their subsequent hardships, launched the Tipu legend, however unfairly, on the world.

The steps taken by Hastings to salvage the English position in South India can be quickly summarised. Whitehill, the inefficient and almost certainly corrupt Governor of Madras was suspended, and a temporary substitute (Charles Smith, member of Council), installed. Independently of him, General Sir Eyre Coote, who twenty years earlier had clinched Clive's work in the Carnatic by his victory at Wandiwash, was sent from Calcutta with all the military force that could be mustered. The Madras treasury

¹ Theodore Hook, *Life of Sir David Baird* (London, Bentley, 1833), Vol. I, p. 35.

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received an injection of three million rupees, with much more to come. On the political front, Hastings set himself to detach the Maratha chiefs, piecemeal, from the confederacy; the Nizam was placated by the return of Guntur to Basalat Jung; and attempts were even made, though unsuccessfully, to contrive an alliance with the Dutch.

When Coote, elderly, fretful, but still a good man in a fight, reached Madras by sea, just nine weeks after Baillie's defeat, he found himself commanding an army destitute of every essential in the way of transport and stores. It was indeed fortunate that instead of marching direct on Madras after Pollilur, Haidar addressed himself to the siege of Arcot, which he had already started—as Muhammad Ali's capital it had political attractions for him. In fact it was when it fell, two days before Coote's landing at Madras, that he proclaimed himself Nawab of the Carnatic. Coote went stubbornly to work, taking advantage of the monsoon season to regroup the Company's forces, and during 1781 conducted a campaign against Haidar which showed that for all the latter's opportunist talents, he was no match for experienced generalship in a pitched field.

It was bullocks, not Haidar or Tipu, that stultified Coote's victories at Porto Novo (July 1st, 1781) and elsewhere. Supply and transport was always troublesome in eighteenth-century India, and in the circumstances of this campaign got quite out of control. The Madras Presidency was so short of food that it depended on Calcutta almost as much for rice and grain as for rupees and fighting men. Though Haidar had no intention of laying waste his beautiful new Nawabship, he did carry out the most thorough destruction in the path of any likely English advance. The consequence was that our armies had to set out from their coastal bases like fleets putting to sea or caravans about to cross the desert—with all their provisions on board. For an army of 11,000 fighting men on a six weeks' foray to relieve Vellore, Coote reckoned he needed one transport bullock per man. But camp followers outnumbered soldiers three to one,¹ and they claimed a bullock apiece too. And then there were all the bullock-loads of fodder needed to feed the bullocks! So we find Coote

¹ Five to one with Harris' army in 1799, according to Ensign Rowley (see p. 280, n. 2). In the event, Coote got to Vellore with the help of some 10,000 bullocks, eked out by '2,800 coolies'.

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demanding from his contractors anything up to 35,000 bullocks at one go, and being covertly jeered at by the Governor, Lord Macartney, for his pains. The agents employed could never produce enough, and the quality was so poor that a twenty-yoke team was needed to drag a twelve-pounder gun over the comparatively smooth going of the Madras suburbs. Haidar had at least as many hangers-on in his host, but for the most part they found their own food and transport, so that he was much more mobile.

Nevertheless, as 1781 drew to a close, Haidar for perhaps the first time in his life showed signs of discouragement. His health was worrying him; the English, however slow and clumsy their movements, showed no diminution in fighting power; the other members of the confederacy were contributing nothing; and during a meeting with his senior officers at this period he even seemed doubtful of his son Tipu's fitness to succeed him. By February 1782 he was definitely planning a withdrawal from the Carnatic, when a new and at first hopeful factor entered the scene. Though I listed the French among the members of the confederacy, we have not so far heard of them in action. A great chance was certainly missed when a strong squadron which arrived off the Coromandel Coast soon after the defeat of Baillie, was withdrawn to Mauritius without landing more than a few hundred soldiers. But now the help long solicited by Haidar came at last to hand. On March 10th, 1782 one of the best French admirals of the day, the Bailli de Suffren, dropped anchor off Porto Novo and put ashore a substantial force of 3,000 French and African¹ troops.

The result was not all the Mysoreans hoped—Suffren became involved in a series of indecisive sea-fights with the English under Admiral Hughes, and the land commander, Duchemin, turned out to be a poor creature—but nevertheless Haidar was encouraged to keep the flag flying in the Carnatic, pending the arrival of a further expedition under the famous Comte de Bussy. Though the latter left France in December 1781, he did not reach Indian coastal waters until March 1783. And by then Haidar Ali was dead.

The dictator of Mysore had been suffering for months from what is sometimes referred to as a boil and sometimes as a cancer in the back—it was almost certainly a carbuncle. At the begin-

¹ 'Coffres'—liberated slaves from the East African coast and Madagascar.

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ning of December 1782 he was celebrating a feast¹ at his camp near Chittoor in North Arcot when his disease took a turn for the worse, and he expired on the night of December 7th. He was sixty years of age.

¹ So the Madras Council told the Court of Directors (Jan. 29th, 1783). But Robert Scowler, the Company's Agent at Tripassore, writing to Macartney as early as Dec. 11th, alleged that Haidar had been unable to lie otherwise than flat on his face for many days, and died 'a most cruel death'. (*Madras Secret Committee*, Jan. 6th, 1783.) The tumour was 'as large as a dinner plate', according to Hasz, the Dutch resident with Haidar.

An Inheritance made Safe

BEFORE describing the smooth but by no means uneventful transmission of power from father to son, we need to form some picture of Tipu's inheritance. The enlargement of boundaries has already been noted, and I would only emphasise how much prestige as well as mobility and wealth Mysore gained by Haidar's conquests along the Malabar coast; the formerly land-locked principality now had ports and ships and an outlook on the oceanic world.

The whole area which Tipu took over was more orderly and more prosperous than our chronicle of perpetual warfare might lead one to expect. Haidar was a fighting man. His lifework was the aggrandisement of Mysore by the only weapon he recognised—the sword. For this he needed a steady flow of money, and since in the India of his day (and much later) there was no stable source for this save the land and its produce, he saw to it that both were maintained in good heart. Well-directed terrorism helped to keep the citizens peaceful and happy. There was an excellent standing arrangement, for example, that if a highway robbery was reported, the local police chief was immediately impaled.

Haidar's methods with tax-collectors were equally direct. We have a picture of them from an unlikely source. The Reverend Christian Frederick Schwartz was born in Prussia in 1726, but came out to India to work with the Protestant Mission in the Danish enclave of Tranquebar, on the Coromandel Coast. By 1772 he was in Tanjore, where he exerted great influence on the Raja and generally impressed people with his wisdom and integrity. As time went on he came to regard himself as an 'English missionary', as a symbol of which he began to sign his name Swartz. Even so it was rather surprising when in 1779 the then Governor of Madras, Thomas Rumbold, chose him to travel to Seringapatam and find out what Haidar's current intentions were—peace or war? Haidar received him very well, though Schwartz does not seem to have gained much solid information. However, he looked sharply about him and wrote down what he saw.¹

¹ Wilks, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Appendix 2.

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One evening when he went to the palace he noticed some men of rank sitting around, with the air of criminals expecting sentence of death. They were, however, local Inspectors of Taxes, brought up to the capital to have their accounts examined. As the result was never enough to satisfy Haidar, these sessions always ended the same way:

I shall hardly know whether I shall mention [writes Schwartz] how one of these gentlemen was punished. Many who read it may think the account exaggerated, but the poor man was tied up; two men came with their whips and cut him dreadfully; with sharp nails was his flesh torn asunder; and then scourged afresh; his shrieks rent the air. . . .

Yet these men, Schwartz adds, continued in their dangerous employment, reckoning that the money they could make on the side was recompense for low salaries and being now and then flogged half to death.

For the general running of local affairs, Haidar relied on a well-developed system of administration taken over from the old rajas; unlike his son he had no love of novelty for its own sake. All higher matters he dealt with himself. I have already mentioned that he could not read or write, and I suspect this was a great help in the rapid dispatch of business. Tipu was to become a slave to *paperasserie*, devoting endless hours to the perusal and drafting of memoranda and dispatches. Things were different at Haidar's court. Schwartz was observant of this too. As he sat by Haidar's side he heard the reports read aloud and the answers rapidly dictated, then watched the scribes run out and return with their completed texts. They well knew how tenacious was their master's memory, and that any deviation from his orders would be 'paid for with their heads'.

Haidar differed from his son in at least two other respects—in religious matters and those of the harem. The former he treated with the widest toleration, as in the affair of the *padres*, and would have been quite happy, for example, to build Schwartz a church at Seringapatam, where his French mercenaries already had their own; as to the harem, he anticipated Napoleon in regarding women as the recreation of the warrior—they were recruited methodically, on a utilitarian basis, and never got a penny beyond their pay.

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As might be expected, Haidar was no patron of the arts, apart from the gyrations of the dancing girls who performed for him on Monday nights. Maistre de la Tour, whose descriptions of the Seringapatam court always have a touch of Saint-Simon, makes great play with the 'comedies' which he says were given every evening, but he adds that when Haidar was present he talked right through them.

Otherwise, so C. H. Rao¹ assures us, the strictest research has not revealed 'a single composition of literature, philosophy or history relating to the period'. Haidar simply governed and fought and left the strongest and most united state in all India behind him; how should we measure his achievement against that of the Mughuls, gradually letting their Empire racket itself to pieces, but adding so much to the world's stock of grace and civilisation?

When Haidar died, shrewd precautions were taken by the faithful generals and ministers around him. The latter included two who were to occupy the stage until the last day of Tipu's life and beyond it—Mir Sadik, Haidar's ruthless Minister of Finance, and the supple Brahmin Purnaiya. They decided to keep the event secret as long as possible. Haidar's body was enclosed in a large box of spices, which was sent off under escort as though it were a treasure chest bound for Seringapatam. But its temporary destination was Colar, about sixty miles along the route, where it was placed in the tomb of his father, Fath Muhammad, pending removal to the capital. Meanwhile the daily routine of the camp and of Haidar's personal household was continued just as though he were alive.

Even so the news leaked out, and the conspiracy which was clearly feared erupted. Its promoters were a cavalry general called Muhammad Armin, a relative of Haidar's, and Shums-ud-din, the Bakshi or Paymaster. Their idea was to place on the throne, as a puppet, Tipu's feeble-witted younger brother, Abdul Karim. But the plot was disclosed by a French officer of the guard who had been drawn into it, and the two principals were arrested and shipped away in chains, as though on Haidar's orders.

¹ *History of Mysore*, by C. Hayavadana Rao (see p. 366), Vol. III, p. 519.

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And the purpose of all this secrecy? To keep the situation under control until Tipu the heir could take over. Haidar's death must indeed have been sudden, otherwise his son would certainly have been on the spot, for prudential as well as filial reasons; instead, as Kirmani puts it, 'that offspring of prosperity and honour was enlightening the environs of Coimbatore and Palghaut with his presence'. Actually, he was at Ponnani on the Malabar coast, conducting a military campaign to which we shall have to revert. Ponnani is nearly 280 miles from Chittoor, but a dromedary courier sent to summon him covered the distance in four days and nights. Tipu got the news on December 11th, and of course set off at once. At first he and his army moved by forced marches, but as he approached Chittoor he slowed to a more dignified rhythm. He reached his father's tent on January 2nd, 1783.¹ Facing enemies within and without, he took the first steps of every prudent dictator—to ingratiate himself with the soldiers by making up their arrears of pay, and with the bureaucracy by confirming them in their jobs. The higher officials he impressed by refusing to be received with pomp and holding his first levee seated on a plain carpet.

The internal situation was in fact less menacing than Tipu might have feared, or his enemies the English hoped. Apart from the rather incompetent group of plotters already described, the main possible source of counter-revolution was naturally the ancient royal house of Mysore and its adherents. It is always hard to remember that neither Haidar nor his successor was ever more than regent of Mysore, in spite of Tipu's attempts to smother the fact later on.

When we last heard of the Wadeyars (p. 21), the nominally reigning Raja was Krishnaraja II, who managed to stay alive until 1766 and to die in peace at Seringapatam. His successor was his eldest son, Nanjaraja, but there is reason to think that Haidar, who was absent at the time, fighting the Nairs in Malabar, really favoured the younger son, Chamaraja. In any case, when the former died suddenly in 1770, aged just twenty-one, it was freely suspected that Haidar had had him poisoned. Yet Chamaraja,

¹ A variant on this story may be noted. Srinivas Rao (see p. 75) alleged that Haidar sent for his son just before his death. Tipu set out alone, but was diverted to Colar where he found his father's body. He paused to perform the funeral rites, and this accounted for his somewhat belated arrival at Chittoor.

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who next succeeded, in his twelfth year, got even shorter shrift—dead by poison in 1776.

There was now no obvious claimant to the vacant throne, and Haidar was free to make his own choice among a gaggle of young princes—which no doubt had been his intention. Predictably, the lot fell on the merest infant, though not before Haidar had gone through a somewhat absurd piece of theatre, intended to show the inspired nature of his choice. The babe of destiny was called Khasa Chamaraja like his wretched predecessor; we shall have a few more glimpses of him before he in turn disappears in equivocal circumstances in 1796.

But as in the days of Khande Rao, the centre of all royalist emotion and intrigue was again a Dowager Rani—this time Lakshmi Ammanni, widow of Krishnaraja II. Ever since the death of the first Chamaraja she had been intriguing with a succession of Madras Governors for the overthrow of Haidar and the reinstatement of the Royal House. It is one of the stranger by-paths of an erratic epoch that an actual treaty to effect this was signed without the prior consent or even the knowledge of the Supreme Government. The high contracting parties were Tirumala Rao, an agent of the Rani, and John Sullivan, the Company's representative at Tanjore, where Tirumala Rao had gone to live and where he had been introduced to Sullivan by the versatile Christian Frederick Schwartz.

The treaty, which had nine military and financial clauses, bore the pompous title of 'The Rana Treaty for the Restoration of the Hindoo Dynasty of Mysore'. It was ratified by the Council at Madras a few months before Haidar's death, but when it reached Calcutta it provoked the Governor-General to one of his driest Minutes:

With respect to the Rani of Mysore, we do not feel ourselves competent to judge of the propriety or expediency of such a treaty, the grounds of it not being sufficiently detailed, nor even the identity of the persons with whom it is proposed to make it sufficiently ascertained.¹

In any case there was no hurry—the matter could be referred to Sir Eyre Coote when he resumed his duties at Madras.

But Sir Eyre Coote never did resume his duties, and the Rana

¹ *Bengal Secret and Military Consultations*, March 11th, 1783.

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Treaty trickled away into the sands of time; however, royalist plotting against Tipu remained faintly alive, as we shall see.

The immediate impression, both in Mysore and below the Ghats, was of a take-over managed with exceptional firmness, by the standards of the day—‘no contemptible proof’, thought James Bristow in his Seringapatam prison, ‘of his [Tipu’s] abilities as a politician as well as a soldier’. Yet Haidar’s death gave the Company’s forces a chance for decisive action, if they had been in a position to take it.

The military situation in December 1782 was as follows. The year had been one of vigorous but abortive activity on both coasts. After serving with his father throughout the earlier campaign already described, Tipu was sent south to Tanjore in February and there inflicted a defeat almost comparable with Baillie’s on a force of about 2,000 men under Colonel John Brathwaite. Tipu’s host of 20,000, half of whom were cavalry, stiffened by 400 Europeans under Lally (never far from Tipu’s side in these days), hemmed the English in. Though Brathwaite’s position was strong and he put up a brave fight against fantastic odds, Lally’s final charge could not be resisted. The English surrendered. This was the second occasion when tribute was paid to Tipu’s courteous and considerate treatment of his European prisoners.

Tipu was next ordered to Porto Novo, to co-operate with the French under Duchemin, which he did with the minimum of enthusiasm on both sides. Their only joint success was the capture of the coast town of Cuddalore. Coote was easily able to frighten them away from his old stamping-ground of Wandiwash, and on June 2nd he fought a drawn battle with the combined forces of Haidar, Tipu and Lally at Arni, about twenty miles to the north-west. For the usual reason of defective transport, Coote had to retire to Madras—in fact this was his last confrontation with Haidar, for the two leathery old fighters were shortly to die within a few months of each other.

And now the scene was shifting to the Malabar side, with important consequences for Tipu. Ten days before the latter’s victory over Brathwaite (February 18th, 1782), Major William Abington had decisively defeated Haidar’s General, Sardar Khan, who was besieging him in Tellicherry. Sardar Khan committed suicide and the English strengthened their position all

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through Malabar. They had just been greatly reinforced by the arrival in Eastern waters of a convoy under Commodore Johnston which had originally been sent from England to capture the Cape of Good Hope from the Dutch.¹ The troops on board included three Highland regiments, the 24th, 98th and 100th Foot, whose commanders, Lt.-Cols. Norman Macleod, William Fullarton and Mackenzie Humberstone were all destined for fame in the struggle against Tipu. Fullarton was detached for service in the Carnatic and the south; the rest of the force, about 1,000 strong, was retained on the Malabar coast.

As the Supreme Government at Calcutta had long been in favour of a diversion against Haidar in the west, so as to force him to withdraw from the Carnatic before the arrival of the French expedition under Bussy, Colonel Humberstone was now sent southwards from Bombay to co-operate with Abington. Though the latter turned sulky and retired to Bombay, the result was further disaster for the Mysoreans. Humberstone, delighted with his independent command, marched out of Calicut to do battle with another of Haidar Ali's generals, his brother-in-law Mukhdum Ali—the same whom we saw giving Haidar such timely aid after Kande Rao's conspiracy. They met at Trikalur on April 3rd, and in spite of tremendous odds in his favour, Mukhdum Ali was defeated and killed. The fighting became desultory during the west coast rainy season, but in November Haidar, with his own death only a few weeks away, sent Tipu to try and retrieve the situation caused by Mukhdum's defeat.

Humberstone had by now concocted a plan for joint operations with Colonel Ross Lang, based on Tanjore. The essential preliminary for this—as for similar campaigns in the future—was the capture of Palghaut, fifty miles inland and commanding the vital east-west corridor between the Ghats and the Annamallai Hills. Humberstone marched on Palghaut directly the weather allowed, and Tipu thought to find him besieging it, but a brush with the Mysoreans² and the news of Tipu's approach caused him

¹ For the voyage and subsequent campaigns of this force, see Innes Munro, *A Narrative of the Military Operations on the Coromandel Coast, 1780-84* (London, 1789). Munro, who came out with the expedition, is a lively observer of the whole South Indian scene.

² A report appeared in the English press that Humberstone lost all his baggage, and this has been faithfully repeated from that day to this. But in a

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to withdraw towards the coast. A thrilling pursuit followed. Tipu got to Palghaut on November 16th, and by the 19th his advance guard had caught up with the English near Ramagiri. Humberstone had to press forward, harassed and cannonaded by Tipu. Towards evening he reached the banks of the Ponnani river. He tried to continue down the right bank, but squelched into unfathomable swamps. Tipu now believed he had the foe in a trap. But during the night Humberstone's men went hunting for a practicable ford. 'At length,' reports Wilks, 'one was found so deep as to take ordinary men to the chin; yet by clinging together in silence, the tall assisting the short, the whole got across without loss of a man.' And so the Bombay army slipped clean away to Ponnani, where they found a force from Calicut under Colonel Macleod waiting to reinforce them.

On November 29th Tipu and Lally tried to take the unfinished defences by assault, but each column, as it drove in, was 'impetuously charged with the bayonet' and the Mysoreans drew back badly mauled. Tipu now regrouped with a view to a further attack. On the morning of December 12th, however, the English pickets noted that the swarm of light troops which usually encompassed them had vanished, and by nightfall Tipu, with the whole Mysore army following, was signalled making off to the eastwards at top speed. Humberstone and Macleod were baffled, but we of course know the reason why.

letter written only a month later (Tellicherry, Dec. 29th), Humberstone specifically states that he lost not a single piece of baggage or artillery. This letter is one of a short but fascinating series dated between Sept. 2nd, 1782 and March 2nd, 1783, and reprinted in that vast disorderly ragbag *British India Analysed* in 1795. The anonymous compiler is believed to have been the Rt. Hon. Charles Greville.

6

The Mathews Tragedy and the Growth of Mistrust

DECISIVE though the moves were which established Tipu Sultan on his father's throne—if the *musnud* or cushion of the usurper of Mysore can be so described—and brief the interval of mourning before he placed himself once more at the head of his troops, there was, as I have said, an opportunity for the English if they could have seized it. But the affairs of the Madras Presidency were in hardly less disarray than at the time of Haidar's invasion of the Carnatic in 1780.

In one respect they ought to have shown improvement. On June 22nd, 1781, there had arrived at Fort St. George the first Governor of any Indian Province to be chosen from the higher ranks of the 'Establishment'. This was George, Lord Macartney, diplomat, ex-Chief Secretary for Ireland, ex-West Indian Governor, lifelong friend of the Fox family and son-in-law to George III's Prime Minister, Bute. To all this were added moral and mental qualities which could have made his tenure outstanding. Unfortunately, he just did not 'come off'. For one thing, he and Warren Hastings were always at odds. The Governor-General was suspicious of the man who had a private line to his own most dangerous enemies, Fox ('my dear Charles') and Edmund Burke, and whose superior personal integrity was not exactly kept shrouded from view. Macartney, on his side, was intent on asserting an independence of Bengal which was no longer strictly his.

There was a similar sort of rift on another front. When Macartney took over, Sir Eyre Coote was still at large in the Carnatic with the ample military and political powers granted him in the days of the shadowy Governor Smith. 'I have courted him like a mistress and humoured him like a child,' wrote Macartney to his friend, John Macpherson, at Calcutta¹—without

¹ Nov. 24th, 1781. My quotations are from *The Private Correspondence of Lord Macartney*, edited for the Royal Historical Society (1950) by C. Collin Davies.

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perhaps reflecting that a crotchety old general might prefer not to think of himself as either. It is in his attitude to Coote and to soldiers at large—surface admiration camouflaging basic contempt—that Macartney reveals the limitations of his type, the Whig intellectual. Coote, he mused, might have military talents for all he knew—he was no judge of them—but he (Macartney) had let himself be imposed upon by Coote's reputation 'until I found from persons of his own silly trade how little bottom there was to support it'.¹ Was there ever a sentence more fatally unguarded?

On the political side, the Governor got caught up in a celebrated wrangle with Hastings on the eternal affair of Muhammad Ali's debts, though that only concerns us in so far as it weakened Madras in its struggle with Haidar and Tipu. Curiously enough Macartney, whose letters make delightful reading, does not seem to have been by nature a *mauvais coucheur*, yet whenever he turned over someone's self-esteem was disturbed.

By the end of 1782 his particular encumbrance, Coote, had withdrawn to Bengal, only to be succeeded by a commander just as difficult and infinitely less distinguished in Major-General James Stuart, who was petulantly claiming the same powers as his predecessor. The fleeting moment of Haidar's death showed him at his worst. The Governor and Council thought the army should take the field at once; General Stuart said it could not be done—and he was far from convinced that Haidar was dead, anyway. A precious month was lost, and when the army did finally set out in mid-January, 1783, Stuart, by way of executing a plan drawn up by Macartney, merely demolished the fortifications of Wandiwash and Karunguli and marched back to Madras. By a painful irony Tipu, at that precise moment, made another of his lightning switches—this time from east to west—and vanished from the Carnatic after himself demolishing the fortifications of Arcot!

The English strategy of diversion, which had originated with Hastings, was indeed proving its worth. By the time the long-awaited French reinforcements under Bussy landed at Cuddalore in March, Tipu was fully engaged once more on the Malabar Coast.

The events which now followed in the western theatre are basic

¹ *Op. cit.*, Macartney to Laurence Sulivan, Chairman of the East India Company, Aug. 29th, 1782.

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to the whole story of Tipu and the English. They raise all the questions of comparative good faith, of apparent and genuine political aims, and of civilised conduct or otherwise on both sides which were to cloud that story until its tragic end.

Even before they knew that the English forces at Ponnani had been freed by Tipu's hurried march to his dead father's camp, the Select Committee of Bombay Council had ordered their Commander-in-Chief, Brigadier-General Richard Mathews, to help with the general diversionary movement by making a push for Bednur. The decision has been criticised as hasty and even casual, though the directive¹ issued to Mathews on December 11th, 1782, seems quite carefully argued. The region was rich and fertile, and much more accessible than Seringapatam, which they reckoned as nine days' march from the coast at Calicut.

But there was the further point that nothing could be more likely to lure the Mysore Army back from the Carnatic than a threat to the city of Bednur itself. This large and prosperous provincial capital had originally been occupied by Haidar in 1763; he had re-named it Haidar-Nagar (in Kirmani, to make things more confusing, it appears simply as 'Nuggar', and in Kirkpatrick as 'Nugr'),² tried to build up its industries, and spent as much time there as possible. More significantly, a large treasure was usually kept at Bednur—another obvious incentive for the Company to capture the place and for Haidar and Tipu to protect it.

Mathews was at first thoroughly opposed to an expedition of forty miles up the Ghats before he had made good his coastal bases. He shocked the Select Committee by choosing for his first landing the Mirjee River, a good fifty miles north of Cundapur, the nearest jumping-off place for Bednur. In an expostulatory letter of December 20th the Committee subscribed themselves to him for the last time as 'Your loving friends'; thereafter they freezingly remained his obedient humble servants . . .

The rest of the story is one of continual suspicion and cross-purposes. On December 31st the Committee 'positively direct' their Commander-in-Chief that once the news of Haidar's death

¹ This and the subsequent correspondence with Mathews and his officers is in Home Miscellaneous Series 183, India Office Records, ff. 127-679. For that Series (cited henceforward as Home Misc., I.O.R.) see p. 362.

² In 1970 it is Nugar once more.

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is confirmed he must relinquish all operations on the coast and make a drive for Bednur; on January 6th, without consulting anyone, he attacks and storms the town of Onore (Honovar) a few miles from Mirjee; on January 19th he moves to Cundapur, and having given the impression before that it was almost impregnable, has to explain away his capture of it with only 700 men; on February 9th Bombay reluctantly accedes to his earlier plea that the Bednur expedition should be abandoned for lack of men to carry spare ammunition; and the next news the Committee get—not from General Mathews—is that Bednur is already in his hands!

Once safely ashore at Cundapur, he seems to have set about obeying his original orders with a kind of cynical precipitation, which yielded unexpected success. By January 28th he had climbed the Ghats, taking several strong points on the way, and brought his army under the walls of Bednur. Here in the meantime, strange events had been brewing.

The Governor of the Province of Bednur was a certain Shaik Ayaz, who had been among a number of young Nairs captured by Haidar in his Malabar campaign of 1766, and forcibly converted to Islam. Haidar made something of a pet of him, and subsequently he showed himself able in his own right. Wilks makes the picturesque point that when Haidar wished to instal him as Governor of Chitaldrug, Ayaz objected that he could not read nor write. 'Reading and writing!' exclaimed his master, 'How have I risen to Empire without the knowledge of either?' Unfortunately, Haidar seems to have overdone his favouritism, and created a rift between Ayaz and Tipu by praising the former at the latter's expense. Now was the moment of revenge.

As Mathews's army approached Bednur, Ayaz had reason to fear that a letter was on its way ordering his second-in-command to murder him and to take charge. On January 24th the fatal letter arrived. Ayaz managed to intercept it, had it read to him in a private room, killed the unlucky reader (a Brahmin) in order to preserve the secret, and at once sent off an English prisoner, Captain Donald Campbell, to Mathews's camp.¹ The upshot was that on January 29th, 1783, the gates of Bednur were opened and

¹ The full story of Ayaz and the letter appears only in Wilks (Vol. II, pp. 53-5); other writers, however, confirm that it was the accession of Tipu which drove him to treason.

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the English army marched in. One of the conditions was that Ayaz should be continued in his Governorship and his private wealth respected. The treasure mentioned earlier fell into Mathews's hands. How much it totalled and what exactly happened to it then and at a subsequent stage will always be a matter of argument. Sums amounting to millions sterling were freely mentioned by interested parties, but the only more or less firm figures we have are a claim by Ayaz for 140,000 pagodas lost by him during the occupation, and a gift of 57,964 pagodas which he is supposed to have offered to the army but which General Mathews refused to release.

Much more than this was certainly at stake. In their directive the Bombay authorities (perhaps knowing their man), had set out with clarity and emphasis the legal position with regard to what they cheerfully refer to as 'the plunder and booty'. The whole of this was the Company's, by right of Letters Patent but,

The Honourable Company having been pleased, as an encouragement to the Army, to give up a moiety of the net produce of the plunder and booty for the benefit of the captors and also a full half of the ships and cargoes, a distribution will be made according to these orders between the Honourable Company and the captors.

Now (March 11th) Bombay, having still not heard a word officially from Mathews about Bednur, reminded him again about the 'plunder and booty' regulations. Somebody had obviously been telling tales, and we do not have far to look. It was Colonel Norman Macleod, commander of the King's regiments under Mathews, who as early as February 14th had written direct to Bombay about the capture of Bednur, had complained of the 'great hardships imposed on H.M. troops' and accused his superior officer of something near embezzlement.

The Bednur campaign in fact supremely illustrates that perennial contention between the Company's army and the soldiers of the King. We shall have to return to it in Cornwallis's time, but must record that repeatedly, when the regiments recruited by the East India Company found themselves alongside the regular forces of the Crown, differences in pay and conditions, and above all in status, caused sharp recrimination. The assumption has always been that the trouble at Bednur was mainly about

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money, but that was not even mentioned in some of the bitterest of the letters which flooded down to Bombay, or in the amazing round robins with which the King's officers peppered their unfortunate Commander-in-Chief. Perhaps a letter from Macleod to the Select Committee (March 6th) puts the thing in its most naked terms. After mentioning that he had been placed in command by Coote at Calicut the previous October, he accuses the Company of promoting

their own officers from the lower ranks to command Field Officers who have risen to that rank in the study and practice of the best European discipline and have generally fought under the first generals of the age. I had the honour of being a lieutenant-colonel in the King's Service when he [General Mathews] was a Captain in the Company's service. When a Wolfe appears the blaze of his merit reconciles soldiers to his most rapid exaltation. But I am not inclined to acknowledge any such conciliatory superiority in Brigadier-General Mathews.

This letter was written in Bombay! Soon after the capture of Bednur, Macleod and the next senior King's officer, Colonel Humberstone, had simply walked out on Mathews and gone off to propagate their grievances in person. The tale was then taken up, with merciless reiteration, by Major John Campbell. His chits to Mathews are invariably written 'as commanding the King's troops', his sick men are 'His Majesty's men', it is 'the King's surgeon at Mangalore' who should attend them, and so on.

And Mathews? At first he took the furore quite calmly. In a letter to the Select Committee on March 4th, after casually mentioning that he had already informed them of the capture of Bednur (unless a letter miscarried, he had not), he attributes the 'flame of discontent which broke out among those in the immediate service of His Majesty and spread to the Company's servants' purely to the money question, the said flame being 'blown upon by a few zealots for plunder and booty'.

But the Select Committee was not satisfied. On April 4th they wrote Mathews a block-buster. They declared that they *still* had heard nothing from him since he left Cundapur and knew nothing of the terms of capitulation granted to Ayaz. There were 'heavy imputations' against him relating to the Prize Treasure and property, and to violent and arbitrary conduct to the Army; he

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should have had more regard to his own character 'where so large a field was open to the gratification of private interest'. In short they had come to a resolution to remove him from his command, suspend him from the Honourable Company's service, and to appoint Colonel Macleod in his place.

This letter—how inevitably!—crossed one of March 28th from Mathews in which he at last narrated the whole course of events, ascribing his successive victories to the gracious will of the Almighty, to whom their humble thanks were due.

Whether the Select Committee agreed with him we do not know, but it was not thanks to them that the supersession of Brigadier-General Mathews never took place. The first leg of Macleod's journey back to Bednur was by sea. He set off accompanied by Humberstone and also by Major Shaw; this was another King's Officer who, as one of the round robins put it, had been 'forced to leave the army' at Cundapur when the 4th Division, which he considered was his by right of command, was given instead to a more junior Company's officer, Major Fentrell.

Off Geriah the ship carrying the three officers fell in with a Maratha fleet. Though the Company and the Marathas were supposed to be at peace, there was a furious fight, the *Ranger* was boarded, Shaw was killed and Macleod and Humberstone wounded. The latter died a few days later. He was only twenty-seven, 'an officer of the most exalted promise', Mill calls him, and one who 'nourished his spirit with the contemplation of ancient heroes'.¹ There was truly a curse on the Bednur expedition, but worse was to follow.

After the fall of the city, most of the fortresses in the neighbourhood surrendered. One of the few which held out was Anantpur. The defence here was strong, and continued after the commandant had accepted Ayaz's orders to yield; it seems moreover (though there are different versions of the story) that an English party advancing to negotiate under a flag of truce was fired upon, or that the members of it were arrested and carried away in irons. In any case the order, at the final assault, was 'No

¹ *History of British India*, Vol. V, p. 268. James Mill's *History* first appeared in 1817. Page references here are to the Fourth Edition in six volumes, with notes and continuation by H. H. Wilson (London, Madden, 1840). There is a rousing description of the attack on the *Ranger* in Home Misc. 183, IOR, ff. 729-49.

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Quarter'. Eye-witnesses seem to agree that out of some 400 defenders about half were in fact taken prisoners, and the wounded sent to hospital. But what gave Anantpur a certain horrid celebrity was that the civil inhabitants were also alleged to have been massacred, and their bodies thrown into tanks. As a crowning atrocity, the victims included

four hundred beautiful women, all bleeding with wounds from the bayonet, and either dead or expiring in each other's arms, while the common soldiers, casting off all obedience to their officers, were stripping them of their jewels and committing every outrage on their bodies. Many of the women, rather than be torn from their relatives, threw themselves into a large tank and were drowned.

The source of this lurid embellishment is a letter which a certain Ensign, John Charles Sheen, wrote to his father and which was printed as an Appendix to Captain Henry Oakes's *Authentic Narrative of the Treatment of the English who were Taken Prisoner on the Reduction of Bednore by Tippoo Sultan*, published By Order of the Directors (i.e. of the East India Company) in 1785. It gained wider currency through being gleefully inserted in Burke's *Annual Register* for 1783 (issued 1784). Oakes's editor says that one of the motives for using Sheen's letter was common justice, as it 'elucidated the cause of Tippoo Saib's cruelty to our people'—he was clearly acting on the principle of retaliation and 'candour must admit that the unjustifiable behaviour of the Company's army goes a considerable way in justifying that of the enemy'.

What is the truth of all this? Sheen's account has an air of theatrical unreality, but was there something solid behind it? Mohibbul Hasan quotes it without mentioning Wilks's statement that 'from the ample means within his reach' he had himself disproved the whole thing; that the 'silly young man' who had decided to dress up his adventures as a romantic tale had made the *amende honorable* long ago; and that as for the business of women throwing themselves into tanks, the body of *one* woman was found in a well some days later, but there was no telling how she got there.¹

Refutations also came from first-hand sources. Fifty-three

¹ Wilks, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 455-6.

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officers headed by Major J. S. Toriano sent a remonstrance to the Honourable Company, and it was published in the same way as Oakes's *Narrative*.¹ Their estimate was one woman killed and one wounded, and two children killed during the fighting. This little manifesto also contains a statement by Sheen (perhaps the one which Wilks was quoting) that 'the business of Anantpur is greatly exaggerated and contrary to what I wrote home . . . impossible that I should be accountable for what the printer chose to publish without my knowledge'.

The estimate of John Moodie, surgeon to the Royal Artillery at Bednur,² is that the casualties among women and children were six.

Finally, *The Life of Colonel John Campbell*³ records that

one survives who from his personal knowledge can positively assert that Lieut. Spens of the second battalion, 42nd Regiment, was sent as soon as we had obtained complete possession, to go round the fort and prevent any further effusion of blood and to restore order.

The survivor was in fact Spens himself, Campbell's anonymous biographer! His phrase *restore* order may be significant, but the Massacre of Anantpur seems a good deal flimsier than other legends on which demolition jobs have been attempted — e.g. The Black Hole of Calcutta, or Cawnpore 1857. Clearly, there was killing; almost equally clearly it was stopped before it got out of hand.

The idea that Tipu had somehow been given the right to 'retaliate' is therefore far-fetched. Nevertheless, what with the treachery of Ayaz and the loss of his fortresses, he was in no very complaisant mood when he reached Bednur from the Carnatic on April 17th. As Mathews had been dispersing his original force of about 3,000 men all over the countryside in penny packets, and thereby thoroughly alarming the shrewder heads among them, the defenders can hardly have exceeded half that number. In spite of this, and the agonies of fever and thirst, a stout defence was made, including at least one successful sortie against Tipu's main

¹ *Vindication of the Conduct of the English Forces under Brigadier-General Mathews*. (Printed by Order of the General Court, Dec. 19th, 1787.)

² *Remarks on the most important Military Operations of the English Forces on the West Side of the Peninsula*, by John Moodie (1788).

³ *The Life of Colonel John Campbell* (Edinburgh, Clarke, 1836).

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battery. The end came after about ten days. The terms of capitulation included the right of the garrison to withdraw unmolested to Bombay. But again there was an imbroglio about that fated money. At the last moment Mathews, who was supposed to hand over all State property intact, had allowed officers and men to draw upon his closely guarded hoard. Some officers are said to have pouched as much as 1,000 or even 2,000 pagodas (£800)—a nice ‘cut’ if true, even though most people’s pay was at least twelve months in arrears!

Tipu thus found the Treasury empty. He caused the officers to be searched, ‘and that in no very delicate manner’ and if his own narrative¹ can be relied on, quantities of money and jewels were found, not only in the prisoners’ clothes and the more intimate parts of their persons, but even hidden in loaves of bread and the cheeks of goats. This was sufficient pretext of Tipu to break the articles of capitulation—the garrison were manacled and shipped off to the dungeons of Seringapatam and the ‘droogs’. ‘The slave Ayaz’, as Tipu always called him, had long since made good his escape to Bombay, and was soon drafting his claim on the Government for those 140,000 pagodas left behind at Bednur . . .²

We might as well complete Mathews’s unhappy history here. According to Brathwaite (also imprisoned at Seringapatam) he was well treated at first and allowed certain privileges, but after one or two displays of temperament, his rations were cut down and he was put into irons. He then refused to eat anything but a little dry rice, and died seven days later. His contemporaries were all convinced he had been poisoned, and *fear* of poison would certainly account for his hunger strike. James Forbes,³ who was passing through Tellicherry at the time, sensibly dismisses a tale that Mathews was poisoned in Tipu’s presence with a cup of coffee, but accepts a more circumstantial one that he refused to eat food prepared by his keepers and was kept alive by the

¹ *The Tarikh-i-Khudadadi*. Its authenticity as the work of Tipu himself is discussed on p. 366.

² ‘Hyatt Sahib, heretofore Killedar and Governor of the Province of Bednore’, makes a surprise reappearance in 1790, supplying the Bombay Government with hints and tips on how to invade Mysore from the west. (*Bengal Secret Consultations*, Oct. 6th, 1790.)

³ *Oriental Memoirs*, Vol. II, pp. 458–9 and 461–2. The memoirs originally appeared in 4 vols. in 1813, but references are to the revised edition in two vols., brought out by Bentley in 1834.

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devotion of a servant, who gave him a share of his own small allowance. An officer who connived at this was threatened with death, and Mathews finally ate the poisoned food. On the other hand the humble prisoner James Scurry believed that though there *was* a poison attempt, the guards 'closed the general's life with the butts of their firelocks'.

Scurry himself was called upon to read to the Killedar of Seringapatam a pathetic message which Mathews had scratched upon the bottoms of four pewter plates. It was to the effect that he knew he had been poisoned, and by the order of Tipu; that his time was short; and he begged the British Government to look after the Malabar Christians from whom he had borrowed 330,000 rupees to pay the expenses of his army.

Even this may not have been Mathews's ultimate testimony—he is alleged to have recorded the date of his own murder in advance! Major David Price¹ declares that when he was acting as Prize Agent at Seringapatam in 1799, there was found in the palace a tin spice box containing a card 'inscribed in the General's well-known handwriting with these emphatic words, "General Richard Mathews murdered, 16th day of August 1783"'. Price assumes that Mathews scribbled this when his death appeared certain. But the card does not seem to have survived, and the story is full of loopholes.

No one has ever had much of a good word to say for Brigadier-General Mathews. The fact that he was mistrusted by his own employers the Bombay Government, as well as his rivals the King's officers, is not in his favour. It is impossible to read the Bednur dossier without a sense of tragic irony, knowing that of the four contenders over precedence and plunder, Humberstone, Mathews and John Campbell would be dead within a year, leaving the voluble Macleod as the sole survivor. Of them, Mathews

¹ Author of the little-known *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army*. A Breconshire lad, Price was shipped out to India as a Cadet in 1781, served through many subsequent campaigns and was Judge Advocate and subsequently Prize Agent with the Bombay Army in 1799. The fact that he only became a Field Officer (Major) in June 1804, a few months before leaving India, gives a certain pathos to the title of his *Memoirs*. The latter, dedicated to and edited by Major Edward Moor (see p. 151), appeared four years after Price's death in 1835. They were printed by J. Loder of Woodbridge, Suffolk, where Moor was the neighbour and friend of Edward Fitzgerald.

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suffered by far the most miserable fate. One hopes that Scurry's story of his last message is true.

From Bednur, Tipu marched to the recapture of Mangalore, scene of Haidar's Birnam Wood stratagem (p. 33) and recently seized by a detached force under Campbell. Though no stronghold, it was always significant as Mysore's chief outlet to the sea. Some readers may already be beginning to murmur 'Too many sieges!' and though I have already omitted a dozen treated as vital in most preceding histories, I am afraid there are some unavoidable ones to come. This second siege of Mangalore was doubly memorable. In the first place, the disparity in numbers was even greater than at Bednur—it may be that only a quarter of the host of 140,000 which Tipu is supposed to have assembled were fighting men, but it included strong French contingents, whereas Colonel Campbell (as he now was) could dispose of no more than 700 Europeans and under 3,000 Sepoys. Secondly, the stubborn defence and the tortuous negotiations to end it gave rise to suspicions of bad faith on both sides which still excite argument.

Tipu appeared before the town in about the third week of May. Having driven in the English outposts with loss and some panic, he sent a flag of truce to Campbell, demanding that he should surrender 'as he valued his life'. Campbell, unlike his wretched predecessors of 1768, was quite unimpressed by numbers, and did not even answer. So throughout the whole of June and early July, while the monsoon rain lashed down and the mud deepened until one could take 'casts or models of animals' from the impressions of those lying dead in it (Kirmani), besiegers and besieged fought it out among the ruinous walls of Mangalore.

Surrender was only a matter of time when, to the astonishment of all and the frothing rage of Tipu, news came of peace between England and France¹, and the consequent immobilisation of all the French forces in India. Article XVI of the Treaty of Versailles laid down that the English and French should not only stop fighting but should do their best to procure peace between their respective allies in India. Four months were to be allowed for this. It was agreed that the period should be reckoned from August 2nd,

¹ The preliminaries were signed on February 9th, 1783, but the details were not known in South India until the end of June.

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1783, and the Government of Madras notified Tipu's agent to that effect.

Meanwhile Piveron de Morlat, the French envoy with Tipu, decided that he could now act as mediator at Mangalore. As his every appearance under a flag of truce coincided with some Mysorean landing from the sea or the springing of an unsuspected mine, pacification was a slow business, but by August 2nd the terms of an armistice were painfully agreed. This was far from being the end of Mangalore's agony, but the immediate effect was to convert the siege into a blockade. Its progress and outcome will be described in due course.

At this turning point in affairs, there was a mixed military situation elsewhere. The last activity we heard about in the Carnatic was Stuart's destruction of the Wandiwash and Karunguli fortifications and his retirement upon Madras (January 1783). This had been followed almost at once by the arrival at Cuddalore of the French expeditionary force under Bussy. The latter provides something of a parallel to Coote on the English side. Both had won fame in the Carnatic campaigns of the 1750s; both had returned to the scene as elderly men, tired and less resilient than of old, though Coote certainly retained more fighting spirit.¹ Bussy was as much at cross-purposes with Tipu as Coote had been with Macartney, and on much the same grounds—the failure of supplies. Tipu had of course quit the Carnatic for Bednur by the time Bussy landed and though he left a substantial Mysorean army behind, Bussy felt he had been abandoned. He accordingly made himself snug in Cuddalore, and waited to see what the English would do.

Until April 21st, hampered by the usual transport problems, they did nothing. Then Stuart started a dilatory march which

¹ They might have had one more clash in the Carnatic in 1783. On April 24th, just six weeks after Bussy's arrival, Coote landed at Madras, having made a second return from Bengal at Hastings's earnest request. Perhaps fortunately, he was too ill to receive an insulting letter, signed by Macartney, Sadleir and Alexander Davidson on behalf of the Madras Council, reminding him that he was amenable to their orders and warning him not to make any mistake as to the powers he possessed. He died three days later.

S. P. Sen, whose *The French in India, 1763–1816* (Calcutta. Mukhopadhyay, 1958), based largely on Pondicherry archives, is invaluable for the period, considers that criticism of Bussy's inactivity has been somewhat unfair; it was shortage of supplies that crippled him.

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brought him before Cuddalore in the first week of June. A well-planned assault on June 13th failed to carry the French defences, but a sortie by the garrison misfired and a bitter day ended with both sides resting exhausted on their arms. Stuart lost 1,000 men killed, wounded and missing—one-tenth of his effectives. 'The individuals of each regiment', says Innes Munro in a moving passage, 'were buried on the spot where they fell, the sleeve of the coat of each, with the button on it, being left above ground by way of distinction.'¹ But the only beneficiaries were the jackals, which came down from the forest in packs to tear open the graves and devour what was within.

Bussy's losses were lighter. Some forty prisoners were taken by the English, among them a certain Sergeant Bernadotte, to whom an astounding destiny would bring a marshal's baton under Napoleon and the crown of Sweden as King Charles XIV.

The English besiegers were now in much the same uncomfortable posture as Tipu before Mangalore, but with far more dangerous forces opposing them. They suffered a further blow when a naval action between Suffren and Hughes (June 20th) forced the latter to withdraw to Madras for a refit, while Bussy received substantial reinforcements. In fact, if he had been a bit more enterprising this very tight situation might have ended disastrously for the English, but he seems to have greeted the news of the Treaty of Versailles almost with relief. He took a forward part in ensuring that the French forces not only in the Carnatic but at Mangalore should be stood at ease, and in pressing an armistice on Tipu.

Stalemate in the Carnatic then, but a different scene elsewhere. That 'Rana Treaty for the Restoration of the Hindoo Dynasty of Mysore' had not been totally fruitless. The links between it and the campaign launched from Tanjore in the south by Colonel Ross Lang, and later handed over to Colonel William Fullarton, are to my mind somewhat tenuous; though it is a fact that it was master-minded by John Sullivan, promoter of the Treaty, while Tirumala Rao, the Rani's representative, was with the advancing army, at any rate at first.

It was a bold enterprise. Between mid-March and mid-May, when he was recalled to the Carnatic and succeeded by Fullarton, Colonel Lang made considerable progress in the always sensitive

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 331.

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area of Coimbatore and Dindigul, capturing the latter on May 4th.

Directly Fullarton took charge, plans became still more ambitious. He managed to assemble an army of over 14,000 men and was moving north-westwards with speed when he and his forces were urgently sent for by General Stuart to join the siege of Cuddalore. Ignoring a command by Lord Macartney to proceed in the opposite direction, he made for Cuddalore by forced marches. The end of the French war released him and, reinforced by units of the Carnatic army, he renewed operations, with a bold push for Seringapatam itself as objective. Again, the August 2nd armistice halted him in his tracks and he had to content himself with the endemic South Indian task of repressing poligars.

The problem now was to make the best use of the four months' breathing space as from August 2nd. It needs to be understood that throughout the Haidar-Tipu period, and including even the phases of armed combat, there was an incessant undercurrent of peace negotiations between the English and the 'country powers'. All parties wanted peace. The British Government and the Company's Court vehemently enjoined it; the Governor-General sought it—on his own terms; the provincial Councils pursued it with intermittent ardour; Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, on their side, were never happier than when sending envoys to discuss the subject, or proclaiming on paper or in verbal interviews (which they used with the skill of twentieth-century dictators) that peace with the English was the warmest wish of their hearts.

Haidar, indeed, seems to have left a dying injunction on the subject to his son. The story is that when Tipu was performing the last rites for his father's body, he came across a scrap of paper tucked into one corner of his turban. On it was written,

I have gained nothing by the war with the English, but am now alas no longer alive. If you, through fear of disturbances in your own kingdom, repair thither without having concluded peace with the English, they will certainly follow you and carry the war into your country. On this account, therefore, it is better to make peace on whatever terms you can procure. and then go to your own country . . .

Mohibbul Hasan is disposed to dismiss all this as coming from 'an English source', but the source is in fact a letter¹ written to

¹ *Madras Secret Proceedings*, Feb. 10th, 1783.

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Mr. Thomas Graham, Persian interpreter to Sir Eyre Coote on January 18th, 1783, by Srinivas Rao, one of Tipu's own *vakils* (envoys), then in Madras for peace talks with Lord Macartney. Now it is a sound rule never to accept any statement attributed to a *vakil* without weighing whether it was designed to please, flatter or mislead the recipient, or to state a simple truth. In this instance it seems most unlikely that Srinivas Rao should place in circulation an anecdote so personal to his formidable master unless he believed it to be true, while Tipu himself could have had no motive for inventing it.

Generally speaking, in all this talk of peace, everyone was sincere, but everyone was wary. The only exception was perhaps Lord Macartney, who leaned somewhat to the side of 'peace at any price', and thereby increased the distrust of Warren Hastings. The immediate background to the armistice of August 2nd was a series of meetings between representatives of Haidar and Eyre Coote, dating from the beginning of 1782. They did not get far because Hastings (to whom Coote reported direct) insisted that the basis must be the Treaty of Salbai, which he had negotiated with the Marathas the previous year and which was finally signed on May 17th, 1782. Article IX of the treaty laid down that Haidar Ali should relinquish to the English and their allies all territories taken from them since 1767 and that he should evacuate the Carnatic; otherwise he would be expelled by force. The weakness of this clause was of course that Haidar was not a party to the treaty! In fact it is hard to say what good purpose the clause served except to bind the Marathas to the Company in an alliance against Haidar if, as seemed certain, the latter refused to comply.

Haidar, sure enough, took a poor view of Article IX, and Tipu in due course a still poorer one. Why, he kept asking in effect, do you keep quoting to me a Treaty about which I know nothing and which I certainly never signed?

But the Treaty of Salbai was Hastings's child and, suspecting Macartney of appeasement, he felt he must stand firmly by it at all costs. On the other hand Macartney, struggling along in his distressed and almost bankrupt Presidency, was prepared to use any means to get peace talks under way. Soon after Haidar's death, for example, he asked a Tanjore official called Sambhaji, who was going on pilgrimage behind Tipu's lines, to sound out the ground. Hastings reared up:

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It appears no less a humiliating than an inauspicious measure that the representatives of the India Company should in solemn Council vest a servant of the Raja of Tanjore with written instructions to go to Conjeeveram, upon a pretended purpose, to meet some friend who might have access to Tippoo. . . .¹

As it turned out, the discussions begun through this despised intermediary and continued by Srinivas Rao brought Macartney and Tipu close enough together to justify the former in asking the Supreme Government whether he could make peace on terms almost identical with the Treaty of Salbai, subject to minor adjustments of territory. Hastings would have none of it—in fact he tried to get his Council to suspend Macartney, as they had previously suspended Governor Whitehill.

There matters had to rest until the peace between England and France. The talks which initially settled the armistice of August 2nd, 1783 were carried forward without a break. It would be superfluous to labour through all the proposals and counter-proposals, but in view of the progress made by the end of October Macartney decided, without reference to Hastings, to appoint two Commissioners to put the finishing touches. The chosen pair were Anthony Sadleir and George Staunton. The former was Second Member of Council at Madras, touchy, unpopular and Macartney's opponent in the first of the two duels which that enlightened and pacific Governor was destined to fight with senior colleagues. Staunton was Macartney's Private Secretary and appears with him in a well-known double portrait (Plate 4c).

The Council's decision was that instead of any more meetings with vakils on English-held or neutral ground, the Commissioners should advance into Mysorean territory and appear before Tipu himself at Mangalore. This inevitably put them in some degree in the position of suppliants. The eventual Treaty was probably the best they could have got, but given the imperious temperament of the man they were dealing with, the after-effects of this loss of 'face' were unfortunate.

The Commissioners left Madras on November 9th—they did not arrive at Mangalore until February 4th, 1784! Their setting forth makes an appropriate start for a new chapter.

¹ Bengal Council to Macartney, *Madras Secret Proceedings*, March 11th, 1783.

Long Road to Mangalore

ON the evening of November 9th, 1783, Lord Macartney sat on his verandah in Madras, looking at the moon. Then he picked up his pen and wrote to his two Commissioners:

I think she promises you a pleasant journey, notwithstanding the prognostications of Mr. Haliburton [Persian Translator], who in common with several other black men are of opinion that you have not set out on a lucky day.¹

Mr. Haliburton knew more about the matter than the moon.

We are not to picture a little posse of mounted men, with Messrs. Sadleir and Staunton in their midst, trotting away westwards down the dusty road. That was quite against the style of the day. Yet it is somewhat staggering to discover that by the end of December, when their numbers had already been pared by deaths and desertions, the Commissioners had 'above 2,000 people' with them. An earlier paymaster's return gave a figure of 1,546 souls, plus the military escort and other official persons, the categories ranging from '740 basket coolies' down to '12 camel people' and '10 elephant people'.

Even so, almost the first act (November 10th) of the Commissioners was to write to Captain Cuppage at Vellore, asking him to send them 100 more rank-and-file sepoy, with officers, as their own were sickly; also, please, two *chickledars* for cleaning arms, theirs having run away. Cuppage obliged, but when it was discovered that the detachment had brought no 'accommodations' with them and that their pay was heavily in arrears, they were returned with thanks.

The weather was terrible—the rain never stopped, so that Macartney wondered how they would get over the swollen rivers—and the countryside devastated by war. When the party got to Conjeeveram (November 11th), they found it deserted. But they

¹ Correspondence between Macartney and the Commissioners is in Additional MSS. 22,452, British Museum. Details of their journey have been taken from Staunton's journal (Add. MSS. 39,857-8).

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plugged on, and by the 15th had made contact with the Mysorean commander in the Carnatic, Saiyid Saheb (also known as Mir Muin-ud-din). This trusted general was in fact Tipu's cousin, being the nephew of his mother Fakhr-un-Nissa: he was also destined, much later, to be his father-in-law. He received the Commissioners with 'expressions of Eastern politeness' and a salute of thirteen guns. After a pause while the vakils who had been negotiating in Madras caught up with them, the first conference began on November 19th at Saiyid Saheb's camp near Arni.

Sadleir and Staunton seem to have assumed that everything was already more or less cut-and-dried, and that all they had to do was to trim up the details. But that was far from the case. The foundation of these and all subsequent talks was the mutual return of occupied areas (on the lines of the 1769 Treaty of Madras); the rock on which they split was the return of prisoners. Shorn of all complications, Tipu's aim was to hold the latter as a guarantee that he would get Mangalore back; conversely, the English wanted to sit tight in Mangalore till all their men were free.

At least that is what Macartney wanted, and Staunton spoke to that brief. Sadleir not only thought the point immaterial but, to Macartney's horror, communicated their difference of opinion to Saiyid Saheb, 'from whom of all persons it should have been concealed'. It soon became clear to those on both sides of the negotiating table that the English mission was hopelessly divided, and that Sadleir was the dangerous element in it. Macartney realised what was wrong. His solution was to add another Commissioner and to make majority decisions binding. The 'third man' chosen was John Hudleston, Secretary to the Military and Political Departments, but he did not overtake his colleagues until December 13th.

There was another source of extreme embarrassment. Since August 2nd the warlike Colonel Fullarton, to whom poligars were as stubble, had been agog for serious action. On October 17th he got a message from Tellicherry that Tipu had violated the Mangalore armistice. What exactly he was told we do not know, but violations had certainly been alleged, as we shall see, and he regarded them as an authority to march. Where to? His first choice, one might suppose, would be the relief of Mangalore. But that was 250 miles in a straight line from Palni, near Dindigul, where he had his headquarters at the moment, and he would have

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been brought head-on with the main Mysorean army. Better to draw Tipu off—to give him the awkward option of raising the siege of Mangalore or risking the loss of his capital.

Fullarton accordingly made for Humberstone's old objective, Palghaut, strategically poised between Coimbatore and the sea at Cochin (End map). Here he optimistically hoped to draw provisions and stores from the English based on Tellicherry, a long way further up the coast. Marching with the speed and method that distinguished him, he forced his way through the Annamalai teak forests and on November 13th stormed the quite scientific defences of Palghaut. The booty included a good store of necessities and 55,000 ever-welcome pagodas in cash.

The Commissioners got the news when they reached Saiyid Saheb's camp on the 19th. They realised at once that their mission was in peril and that Saiyid Saheb, who was supposed to be about to evacuate the Carnatic, had had a trump card thrust into his hand. The very next day they wrote ordering Fullarton to withdraw to his positions of July 26th—i.e. the day that Tipu had indicated that he would sign the Armistice of Mangalore. The message was sent through Roshan Khan, Tipu's commander confronting Fullarton. The latter returned it unopened, and without waiting for supplies from the coast, set out for Coimbatore, a key town for those approaching the Ghats from the south. It fell to him, with a further stock of provisions, on November 28th.

Next stop, Seringapatam! With ten days' grain in hand and 'exulting in the bright perspective which lay before us', as Fullarton put it, he and his men were about to set off for the Gajalhatti Pass into Mysore when another and even more peremptory message came from Sadleir and Staunton. This time it was opened, but not until it had been reinforced by ukases from Macartney himself was it, with infinite reluctance, obeyed. In the last week of December Fullarton left Coimbatore with his booty.

As he returned the way he came, whom should he meet but the Reverend Christian Frederick Schwartz, en route—as he thought—to rendezvous with the Commissioners at Seringapatam, and to act as their interpreter. Wilks quotes his reaction to Fullarton's retreat:

'Alas,' said I, 'is the peace so certain that you quit all before the negotiation is ended? The possession of these two rich countries

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[Palghaut and Coimbatore presumably] would have kept Tippoo in awe and inclined him to reasonable terms. But you quit the reins and how will you manage the beast?' The Colonel said, 'I cannot help it.'

They went their ways—Schwartz to find that on Tipu's orders he would not be allowed to ascend the Ghats¹ and that the Commissioners would not be allowed into Seringapatam; Fullarton to break up his army and canton it.

Years later he put his *View of the English Interests in India* into a pamphlet—a diffuse and somewhat uneasy performance, since as a soldier he wished to pose as the thwarted conqueror of Seringapatam, while as a past and prospective M.P.² he rather clearly wanted to keep on the right side of the politically powerful Macartney. Whether in fact his expedition could have ended the struggle with Tipu at one blow is an interesting question. He had, by current Madras standards, an exceptionally strong, well-found army, and at Coimbatore he was better placed than Tipu for a rapid march to Seringapatam. On the other hand we do not know what forces would have barred his way had he persisted in disregarding the armistice; a significant note from Roshan Khan to Saiyid Saheb mentioned that Tipu had 'detached 4,000 horse towards him' and they were waiting at the foot of 'Garethully Ghat' to attack Fullarton if he did not withdraw. What is certain is that intense suspicion had been generated on the Mysore side at Arni. The Commissioners realised that they would get nowhere with Saiyid Saheb and that they must make for the fountain head.

It had always been an important part of their programme to visit Bangalore and Seringapatam to see for themselves the condition of the prisoners and to relieve their wants. Disquiet about the route first arose at Arni, but when they took the road again on December 10th it seemed that they were being led roughly in the right direction. We have the record of their marches. At this stage they seem to have covered twelve to fourteen miles a day, with an occasional spurt of sixteen to twenty miles—good going, considering the rough country, oppressive weather, and their cumbersome

¹ On Dec. 29th Tipu wrote to the Commissioners saying that he would send an authority for Schwartz to proceed. But he either failed to dispatch it, or it arrived too late.

² Member for Plympton 1779-80, Haddington Burghs 1787-90, Horsham 1793-6, Ayrshire 1796-1803. The pamphlet is dated 1787.

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train. Time had also to be found for an inordinate amount of journal-keeping, letter-writing and the exchange of acrid memoranda among themselves! By December 18th they were at Anicul, at the top of the Ghats and only twenty miles short of Bangalore. Here they became more than ever doubtful of Tipu's intentions for their journey. On the 20th they halted dead-beat at Marlanvadi, another sixteen miles on, but swinging south-west, *away* from Bangalore. Realising that they were not going to be allowed into the latter, they managed with great difficulty to persuade the vakils to let them send to the prisoners there three coolie-loads of oddly-assorted comforts—a small parcel of medicine, five dozen and three bottles of brandy and forty pairs of shoes, together with scraps of news about their relations.

Camp was struck again, and now the road seemed to be leading towards Seringapatam. But at Malvalli, thirty miles from the capital, there was another crisis. The Commissioners informed the vakils that they needed 25,000 seers of rice. They were given half of it and were told that they could only have the other half if they agreed to travel by a route which avoided Seringapatam, instead of making their next stage Arikeri, on the main road thither; in fact the vakils said they had positive orders from Tipu, which it would be death to disobey. The Commissioners finally knuckled down and got their rice, and having spent over a week at Malvalli resumed their endless trek on the first day of 1784.

The going grew steadily grimmer. Not only were the party being taken by deliberately circuitous routes well to the north of Seringapatam, but the chosen paths were so difficult that some of their people and animals perished by the wayside. Yet the day after they left Malvalli they got a message from Tipu urging them to 'make long marches' and come to his presence with speed, so that peace could be settled and the prisoners (who, he now announced, were not in Seringapatam at all) could be released.

It is hard not to conclude that Tipu was playing a double game—pretending to want the Commissioners in a hurry, but actually holding them off until Mangalore was safely in his hands.

There, the situation had deteriorated since August 2nd. One of the armistice terms, which had given rise to much bitterness, was that a bazaar or market was to be set up where the starving garrison could buy up to ten days' provisions at a time, while a month's supply of anything it did not stock could be brought in

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from outside. But the Bombay Select Committee was obliged to report to the Court of Directors that Tipu had deliberately sabotaged this arrangement by charging absurdly high prices for a scanty array of foodstuffs, that the market was finally closed and that the garrison, having long since killed and eaten the 'very fine horse' which Tipu sent Colonel Campbell after the armistice, were thrown back on a diet of rats, snakes, frogs, ravenous birds, and the jackals which, as at Cuddalore, came to eat the corpses of their comrades.

Matters were not helped by the proceedings of Colonel Macleod, Campbell's superior officer. He kept sailing in and out; carried on curious conversations with Tipu; and when he brought a strong reinforcement which the garrison considered he would be entitled to land directly the armistice expired on December 2nd,¹ he shocked them by putting to sea again on the 1st, alleging a shortage of water, only to pop back on New Year's Eve with some uneatable provisions. Between whiles, 'finding my army at leisure', he went off to attack the small State of Cannanore, a piece of aggression which he explained by saying (correctly enough) that the Bibi or Queen had detained and put into irons some of his troops shipwrecked on her coast.²

Cannanore fell on December 14th, after some fairly stiff fighting, and Macleod duly dug his men out of the dungeon where they lay 'fettered, stripped, and nearly starving'. His feat seems to have met with general applause, though when Mathews had tried to make Cannanore 'tributary to the Company' a few months before, the Bombay Committee told him sharply that this was 'totally foreign . . . to the system on which we have acted, which has been to support the Malabars in their independence'. Macleod signed a treaty with the Bibi which caused trouble afterwards, and double-banked his self-justification by glowing accounts of Cannanore's commercial value.

It is one more sidelight on the finances of conquest at this period that as late as November 1784, the Bombay Government was still trying to squeeze out of Macleod (now a Brigadier-General) the Company's moiety of plunder taken at Cannanore. The reply was

¹ The Commissioners, who only started on their journey a few weeks before the expiry date, were empowered to extend the armistice, and apparently did so.

² *Bombay Public Considerations*, May 13th, 1784.

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that it had all been distributed to the troops and that he (Macleod) had given up half his own share, which should have been 23,131 rupees, to augment that of the N.C.O.s and privates. As to the other half,

The obstinacy of the enemy in standing a storm against such superior force gave the army the right to their whole property, and the agents were proceeding to dispose of many things which the inhabitants could ill spare. With the residue of my share I redeemed them from this severity.¹

At Mangalore, the nerve-racking state of blockade into which the siege had evolved continued until January 23rd, 1784, when the exhausted garrison, now down to half their original numbers, marched out with honours, having kept the principal army of Mysore tied up and wasting away for nearly nine months. Their heroic commander, already stricken with tuberculosis when the siege began, died at Bombay on February 23rd. Campbell's last half-audible whisper to his friend Captain Lindsay exonerated Tipu from breaking the capitulation terms. He was only three years older than Humberstone.

However tediously one siege may resemble another, this is one in which the losers deserve our long-delayed salute.

On the day that Mangalore fell, the Commissioners were still more than a week's march from Tipu's camp. Though they may have been led by circuitous routes, it cannot be said that the plight of a Bombay army in Mangalore quickened the pace of the men from Madras.² For some seventeen days they lingered at Chenroy-patam, forty miles north of Seringapatam, being still unwilling to leave the neighbourhood of the English prisoners. However, on January 23rd they once more, as at Arni, decided that they did not hold a strong enough hand, and that they must seek Tipu at Mangalore. They had had a satisfactory receipt from Captain

¹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 23rd. The money was in fact shared out 'on the drumhead'—the soldiers knew that otherwise they might have to wait for years, even to receive their legitimate moiety.

² Macartney, too, shows little concern—at any rate in writing—for the fate of his nephew by marriage. Campbell's mother, like Macartney's wife, was a daughter of the 2nd Earl of Bute.

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Gowdie for their Bangalore comforts, so as a final gesture¹ they now sent a similar but larger 'gift parcel' to Seringapatam—'154 sealed baskets of Liquor, containing 15 to 18 bottles each, 34 sealed kegs of Brandy, 1 sealed trunk of Shoes, 3 ditto Hats, 2 ditto Cotton Stockings'. The prisoners could at least face a series of 'mornings after' with their sore heads and wavering legs in neat trim.

Twelve days more on the road, and at last, on February 3rd 1784, the Commissioners pitched their penultimate camp at Feringapettah, a few miles from Mangalore. The next day two 'principal men' of the Mysore army conducted them to a site about a mile from Tipu's camp. Their first interview with him was to be the following afternoon, but almost at the moment of setting out, Staunton and Hudleston had one of their characteristic rows with Sadleir. Apart from differences of opinion about the conduct of the mission, there had already been unpleasantness over certain accounts he had refused to render on the ground that he had got his own money mixed up with the Company's. Now the problem was gifts for Tipu. Staunton and Hudleston thought the two elephants they had brought with them for the purpose were 'too poor and shabby'; had not Sadleir been provided with something better? At first he denied it, then suddenly produced some 'horse furniture of considerable value'. One hopes Tipu was reasonably satisfied with the gifts finally handed over: one flowered gold dress complete, one set of turban jewels, the horse furniture, two whole pieces of broadcloth, red and green, one piece red and blue, one sword, one elephant (the least shabby, presumably) and two horses.

The Commissioners were under pressure to make peace fast. Macartney, his nerves frayed by lack of news—'all the passes are narrowly watched by Tipu's people and unusual pains taken to shut up the communications'—had written to them on January 18th:

Peace is not only so desirable but so necessary an object to us in our desperate [financial] situation that it is our duty to endeavour to accomplish it by every means that are not incompatible with our honour. But it is possible we may be disappointed,

¹ An earlier attempt by the Seringapatam prisoners to get into touch with the Commissioners had been frustrated by an unsympathetic Killedar.



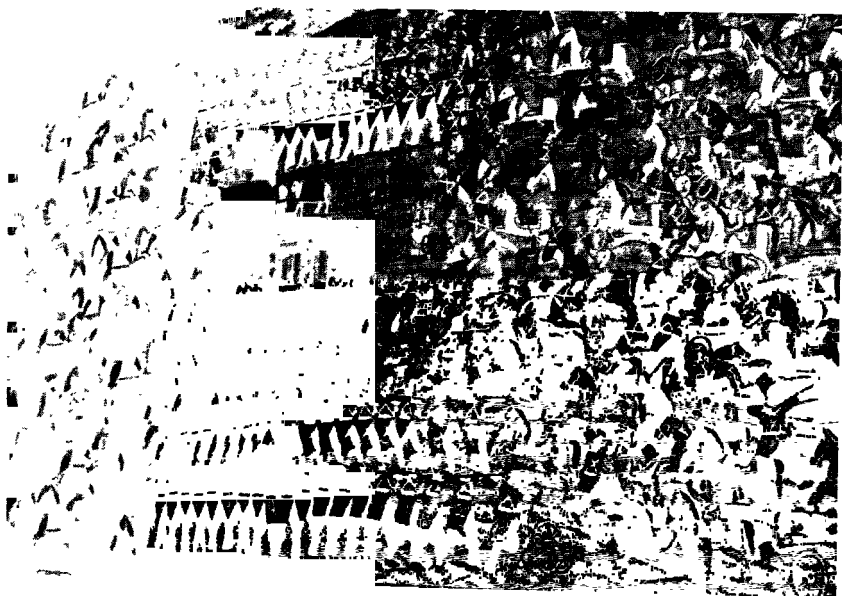
1. Tipu Sultan. Gouache by an Indian artist, Mysore, c. 1796-9

Given to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Colonel T. G. and Major R. G. Gayer-Anderson, 1952



2(a). The dungeons, Seringapatam, where English prisoners are said to have been confined

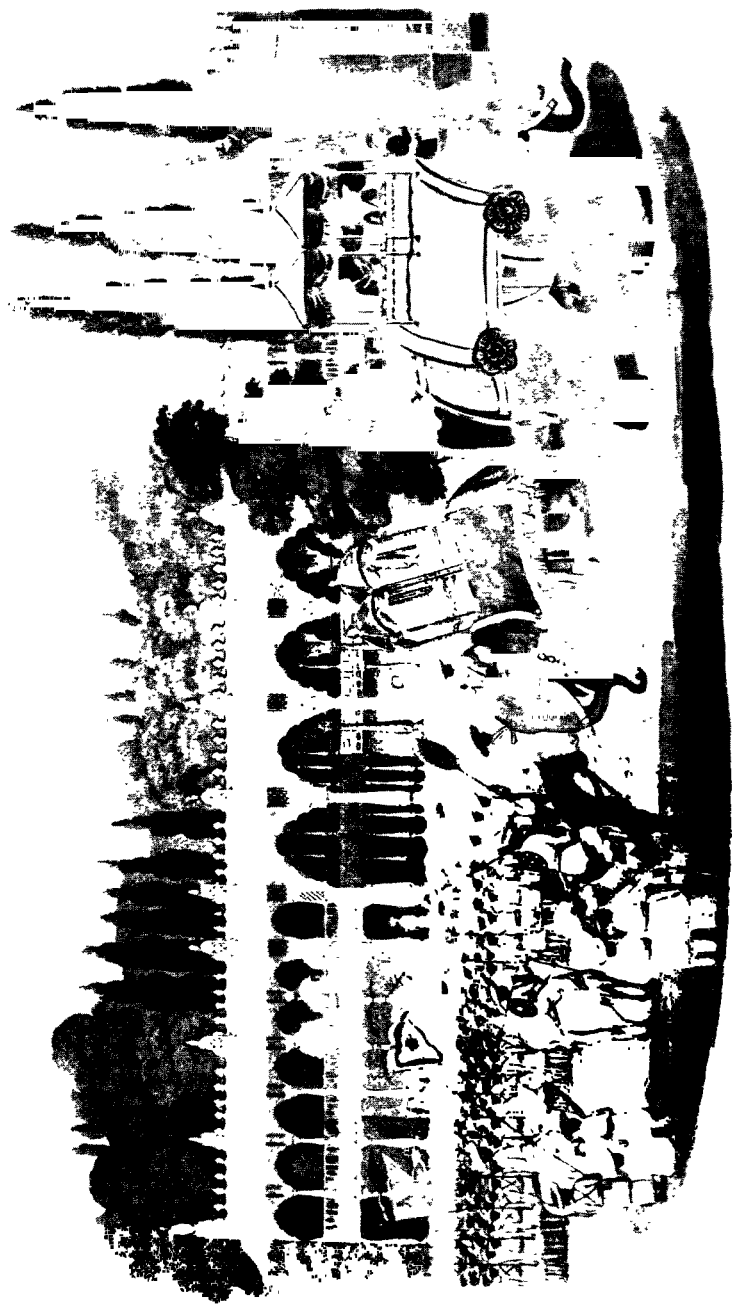
Dept. of Information, Government of Mysore



2(b). Mural in the Daria Daulat Pavilion, Seringapatam

It represents the Battle of Polhulur (1780). The Company's troops, surrounded by the Mysoreans, form a hollow square, with Colonel Baillie seated in his palanquin in the centre. The murals, partially whitewashed by Tipu during the 1799 siege, were restored by Colonel Arthur Wellesley and again by Lord Dalhousie in 1855

Dept. of Information, Government of Mysore



3. The Lal Bagh Palace, Seringapatam, with Tipu Sultan about to mount his elephant
Pl. 49 in Charles Gold's *Oriental Drawings* (London, G. & W. Nicoll, 1806)

4(a). Haider Ali in Durbar
From the *European Magazine*, 1700



4(b) Muhammad Ali Khan, Nawab of the Carnatic
By George Willison. Several versions of this picture exist in India and the United Kingdom
India Office Library



4(c). Lord Macartney (*left*), with George Staunton, his secretary
and member of the Mangalore mission of 1883. By L. H. Abbott, *National Portrait Gallery*



5. The heroic image – Sir Eyre Coote (*left*) and Lord Cornwallis on the staircase of the old India Office, Whitehall

Coote by Thomas Banks, Cornwallis by John Bacon. A somewhat larger version of this statue of Cornwallis as a Roman general is in the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta. *India Office Library*



6. A soldier of the Bombay Native Infantry
Pl. 28 in Gold's *Oriental Drawings*



7. One of Tipu's infantrymen

The *bubri* (tiger pattern) tunic was made of purple woollen material, Pl. 10 in Gold's *Oriental Drawings*, Seringapatam in the background.



8(a). Rayakottai – a typically precipitous fortified ‘droog’
Pl. 6 in Alexander Allan’s *Views of the Mysore Country* (London, 1794)

8(b). Mounting the Ghats

Men and oxen on the drag-ropes, an elephant pushing behind. Pl. 14 in Gold’s *Oriental Drawings*



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that Tippoo, however solicitous he was for peace some time since, may from a favourable turn in his affairs at Poonah . . . now wish to draw the negotiations into the monsoon on your coast and to take his chance of the chapter of accidents.

However, the mission refused to be rushed, and held many and long meetings, most of them with Purnaiya and Krishna Rao, those two 'very acute Hindoos', as Hudleston called them thirty-four years later. It was not until February 19th that Tipu submitted his first draft Treaty, its four articles being summarised by the Commissioners as follows:

1. Restoration of English conquests on the Malabar Coast, for which an equal number of forts in the Carnatic, together with all prisoners, were to be released.
2. Restoration of all English conquests on this side of the Peninsula, together with the 55,000 pagodas taken by Colonel Fullarton in the Fort of Policacherry [Palghaut], for which the evacuation of the Carnatic by Tipu's troops was to be complete.
3. The slave Ayaz Beg to be given up.
4. The Commissioners not to return to the Carnatic until everything should be properly adjusted and executed.

The English retorted with a note which made it clear that they had no intention of returning Ayaz or, for that matter, the 55,000 pagodas. On the 24th they were invited to submit their own draft Treaty. Tipu rejected it and threatened to return to Seringapatam, with the Commissioners in his train. There was a further exchange of drafts, but things seemed so menacing that on the 25th the Commissioners, whose communications with the ships in the harbour were looked upon with great disfavour by Tipu, warned the captains that if no letter was received from them within five days, or if the flagstaff was removed from its usual place, it would mean that the negotiations were at an end. The ships were then to sail at once to inform Bombay and Madras and to prepare Fullarton and Gordon for offensive operations when the word was given.¹

It never was given, yet the most sensational and at the same

¹ The following day (Feb. 26th), Macartney himself wrote to Fullarton that if the evacuation of Palghaut had not been completed he ought to 'retain the possession of that place until the suspicion of Tipu's sincerity is removed'. Communication with the Commissioners was still interrupted; every appearance increased their doubts. Fullarton must hold on to every inch of ground

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time most baffling incident of the whole mission followed.

The core of the matter is that in June 1817 Wilks published the second volume of his great work on the history of Mysore. In it (pp. 515-17) he gave an account of how the servant of Lieut. Thomas Dallas, commander of the escort, was on some unspecified date acting as temporary interpreter when he overheard Staunton and Hudleston concerting a plan to 'escape' from Mangalore by ship; Sadleir was to be given a last-minute chance to join them, but the escort and everyone else were to be abandoned. The servant blabbed, Dallas and Staunton had a confrontation, and the 'plot' if such it was, expired.

A review of Wilks's book in the *Quarterly* (October 1817) traversed this passage severely, and the scandal then exploded in the General Court of the East India Company where Hudleston, the sole surviving Commissioner, was at that moment seeking re-election as a Director. Genuinely shocked by what had risen up and hit him after thirty-four years, he was almost hysterical in his denials. Dallas, now Major-General Sir Thomas, stood by his guns, and Wilks accused Hudleston of having evaded an interview with him on grounds of defective memory. Apart from the Court, the main arena of the fight was *The Asiatic Journal*, several of whose 1818 and 1819 issues bulge with contributions of unbearable prolixity, especially from Mr. Hudleston. He concentrated (though that is the wrong word) on two points—at what stage in the negotiations could the Commissioners have wanted to escape, and was the supposed plan believable?

It does seem that he was on firm ground in claiming that between March 1st and 6th (the limiting dates, for various reasons) the earlier fear of a break-down had subsided and they were all engaged closely but quite amicably with Tipu in the last stages of their long wrangle.

Wilks had combined the escape story with a general picture of terrorism exerted on the Mission. What makes the whole thing particularly complex is that both at the time and subsequently there was a 'hawks and doves' situation, with the soldiers in the former category and the civilians (Macartney and the Commissioners) in the latter. Most hawkish of all was Macleod, eyeing the

till he got further instructions and be prepared for action at a moment's notice. But by then it was too late to retain Palghaut. The 'Gordon' referred to by the Commissioners was Colonel Gordon, commanding at Tellicherry.

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situation from Cannanore and now and then from the ships offshore. He it was who first launched the famous story of the gibbets which were supposed to have been erected in front of the Commissioners' tents, either as a threat or an insult. He did not *invent* the gibbets—it simply happened that Tipu (see p. 91) had been hanging a large number of conspirators near the spot chosen by the English for their camp. Far from welcoming them with gibbets, Tipu's first message to them was a polite enquiry whether they would be arriving in their 'palankoons' or 'riding horse or elephant', so that his own men could do the same.

The difficulty is that neither faction is wholly frank with us about what happened on the journey and in Mangalore; the hawks play up Tipu's misdemeanours, the doves play them down. A tentative conclusion in this, our most important test of Tipu's good faith so far, is that he showed himself shrewd, cunning and mildly unscrupulous, but not far outside the normal code of Eastern—and indeed much Western—diplomacy of that age.

At last, an agreed draft was reached, and on March 11th the second Mysore War came formally to an end. The Treaty of Mangalore was signed by the Commissioners on the one part and by 'The Nabob Tippoo Sultan Bahadur' on the other—one of Tipu's periodical appearances in an official context as 'Nawab of Mysore', to which title he had neither right nor pretension. Then the Commissioners left thankfully for Madras, Staunton and Hudleston by sea, Sadleir overland!

The document they took with them was in nine instead of the original four clauses. It opened with a declaration of friendship and an undertaking that neither side would make war on the allies or help the enemies of the other; there was to be a mutual restitution of territories and prisoners; Tipu was to renounce all claim to the Carnatic, though his forces were to retain the fortresses of Ambur and Satgarh (and the English those of Dindigul and Cannanore) until the other conditions had been fulfilled. Both 'the slave Ayaz' and the 55,000 pagodas had been quietly forgotten.

It all worked out fairly smoothly, except in two respects. Macleod's treaty with the Bibi of Cannanore had already been disavowed by Bombay, and now, out of sheer pique it would seem, he frustrated one of the conditions of the Treaty of Mangalore—that Cannanore should be formally handed back to its ruler in the

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presence of an unarmed and unescorted representative of Tipu, who regarded the Bibi as his ally. On April 17th the Bombay Government got a three-word message from Macleod—‘Cannanore is evacuated’. He had simply left. Tipu was extremely annoyed, and so for a different reason were Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, since it had been intended to hold Cannanore and Dindigul until it was quite certain that all the English prisoners had been returned.¹ As we shall see, some of them never were returned, and though it is not true to say that they were supinely abandoned to their fate, their subsequent miseries cast a grey shadow over the Treaty of Mangalore.

Four years of war for the mastery of South India had been ended by the weaknesses of both sides—Tipu’s loss of his French allies against the financial crisis in Madras—though (barring the Fullarton episode) the recent military advantage had certainly been with Tipu.

The Treaty was generally welcomed even by those who felt the Commissioners had been pusillanimous, or believed, like Innes Munro, that peace would be no more than temporary. Hastings, beset by his own troubles in Oudh and elsewhere, grudgingly concurred; his main criticism was the omission from the Treaty of the name of that unfortunate prince, the oldest and most honoured ally of the English in India, His Highness Wallah Jah! To this Macartney replied in effect that if it was a question of signing any document on behalf of Muhammad Ali and expecting the latter to honour it—rather Hastings than him! (More seriously, Macartney’s reply to Hastings’s strictures, and his counter-attack on the Governor-General’s whole attitude to the negotiations, is a masterly piece of polemical writing, which still lives by its force and style, as well as by its logic.)²

¹ Dallas was given the job of rounding them up and escorting them into British territory. As he and his party crossed the border from Mysore, they were met by two companies of sepoy. Seeing ‘an English boy on a rough pony’ riding alongside, Dallas asked to be taken to the commanding officer. ‘I am the commanding officer’, replied the child. This was the future Sir John Malcolm, an Ensign aged fifteen. (J. W. Kaye, *Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm*, London, Smith, Elder, 1856, Vol. I, p. 11.)

² Macartney to the Governor-General, July 31st, 1784 (*Bengal Secret and Military Consultations*, Aug. 17th, 1784).

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The principal figures of my last two chapters now begin to disperse. Major-General Stuart's Indian career had already ended in the tragi-comedy of a series of quarrels with the Madras Council so violent that he who had arrested Governor Pigot in 1776 was himself now arrested for refusing to obey orders. He was shipped off to England in December 1783. The next senior King's Officer, Major-General Sir John Burgoyne, also proved contumacious, and had to be arrested in his turn.¹ Then the old dissension between the Mangalore Commissioners was echoed when a quarrel in Council over Hudleston's allowances as Military Secretary led to Sadleir calling the Governor out. The duel took place on September 24th, 1784. Macartney got a ball in the ribs; his own shot missed his opponent, and the matter was left there.

Macartney's second duel occurred after he went home at the end of 1785. Now it was the still aggrieved General Stuart who challenged him. They met at Kensington on June 8th, 1786, and again Macartney got the worst of it—his portion this time was a wound in the shoulder. Stuart would have liked another meeting, but the Sovereign himself intervened.

Only a few months before, as we shall see, Macartney failed by a hairsbreadth to achieve the Governor-Generalship. How often he must have recalled his own saying of January 1782: 'A man who has not been in India knows Mankind but by halves; and he who has been in India knows Mankind alas! but too well.'

A member of our cast to whom we can say farewell on that morning at Kensington is Colonel William Fullarton. Always one for a fight, he was there as Macartney's second. In spite of his success as an amateur soldier,² he never saw active service again in India or anywhere else after his famous foray of 1783; the rest of his life was spent in politics and in the local affairs of his native Scotland, with a short interlude as Commissioner in Trinidad in 1803. He died three years later.

Warren Hastings himself left the Indian scene almost simultaneously with Macartney, only to reappear on a more sinister

¹ One of his grievances was the Mathews case over again—the Company suddenly made Ross Lang into a Lieutenant-General so that he could lord it over Burgoyne and other high-ranking King's officers.

² His original appointment as Colonel of the 98th Regiment, which he had been instrumental in raising in 1780, was bitterly criticised in Parliament.

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stage in Westminster Hall in 1788. After his departure from Calcutta (February 1785), the next senior Member of Council was John Macpherson, and he succeeded as acting Governor-General. The strange course of events whereby Muhammad Ali's rather dubious agent of 1767 came to occupy even temporarily the seat of the great Warren Hastings is outside our theme, but his bland belief that he should have been allowed to remain there permanently was a nuisance in store for his eventual supplanter, Lord Cornwallis.

Of the potentates with whom these men had had to deal, two who continued on their way with their usual self-possession were Muhammad Ali and Tipu Sultan. The former had still another ten years to go in more or less peaceful enjoyment of his Nawabship. He had become in a way a venerable figure. Many despised, some pitied him. Let Innes Munro, who met him out driving in 1780, speak his eulogy, in a dumb-crambo scene fully worthy of Lord Burleigh in *The Critic*:

The old gentleman's hoary beard and pensive mien [Plate 4b] bespoke him a prince of a dejected and oppressed mind; for while he passed the newly-arrived Europeans he cast on them such a glance of majesty blended with sorrow, as one could not behold without passion and respect.

The expression in his countenance seemed to say, Can you who are as yet unpolluted, and strangers to the depravity of your countrymen in this part of the world, can you give any consolation to, or assuage the pangs of, an afflicted prince, who groans under an unsupportable load of oppression, imposed upon him by the artifice of simulative friendship?¹

Answer, one fears, 'No'.

For Tipu, there was a pause of peace with the Europeans, but none with his own countrymen. Immediately the Treaty of Mangalore was signed, he struck his camp and marched southwards.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

8

Tipu Sultan, Dictator of Mysore

FIFTEEN months had passed since Haidar Ali's death in December 1782, and still the face of his son had not been seen in their capital. Yet even then Tipu did not make straight for Seringapatam. Instead he carried out a wide sweep through Balam and Coorg, which were in their usual state of smouldering rebellion.

This showed a high degree of self-confidence on Tipu's part, because both in Mangalore and Seringapatam his authority had recently been challenged.

Remember the Mangalore gibbets! The rebellious spirit there was one of Tipu's most trusted lieutenants, the Commandant Muhammad Ali. This bearer of an all too pervasive name had first come to the front in Haidar's battles with Colonel Joseph Smith, had been given a division at Arni, and had been one of those loyal ministers and generals round Haidar's death-bed who made the succession safe. When the siege of Mangalore opened, he held a senior command, but not for long.

Tipu had never been happy that the former Killedar of Mangalore, Rustum Ali Beg, had been justified in yielding the town so easily to General Mathews, and the subsequent strong resistance of Colonel Campbell enflamed his suspicions. In 1783 Muhammad Ali was told off to investigate. Though he put in the most lenient report he could on an old comrade, Rustum was condemned to death. Muhammad called out one of his battalions and rescued him, but then seems to have faltered, let himself be trapped, and finally surrendered with seventy-two men, the remnant of his following. Up went the celebrated gibbets, and up a selection from the faithful seventy-two. All the senior officers combined to beg the life of Muhammad Ali himself. Tipu yielded and sent him off towards Seringapatam in chains, but before the party had got very far, he was strangled with a halter. Tipu expressed great indignation, and the commander of the escort (who had had a quiet conference with him before setting out) was given a short, judicious spell in prison.

That is the usual account, based on information carefully

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gathered and sifted by Wilks; Kirmani, as usual, has a slightly different, more picturesque version.¹ Not only does he place the whole episode much earlier, but he records Tipu's retort to Mohammad Ali's pleas for Rustum—'in order to confirm or establish your government, you must give the sword no rest'. Kirmani continues that when Muhammad Ali had rescued the prisoner he mounted him on his own elephant and started for Seringapatam. They were captured and brought back; Rustum was immediately impaled and Muhammad Ali's followers were mutilated. They worked on his feelings with cries of 'Vile incendiary! Thou art the cause of our ruin! Our hands and noses have been sacrificed to our senseless love of thee!' and that same night he killed himself, either by tearing out his tongue by the roots, or by swallowing diamond powder.

Afterwards, letters from the English offering him rewards for treachery were found unanswered in a box;² otherwise he left behind him only a reputation for piety, a mendicant's cap, a coat presented to him by his *maulvi* and forty copper coins stamped with an elephant.

Whichever way it was, Tipu certainly lost an able officer in Muhammad Ali, and the British a potential or actual collaborator.

His revolt seems to have been a spontaneous and personal act of protest; the Seringapatam affair which happened a few months earlier was wider in scope. It aimed at nothing less than restoring the old Mysore dynasty, and the moving figures in it were all Hindus. At the head stood a Brahmin called Shamaïya, the Inchevalla or head of the post office and the police—two departments closely allied, since a chief function of the former was to supply confidential information to the latter. With him were his brother Rangaiya, in the same service, and the paymaster of Seringapatam, Narasinga Rao.

Did this spring from the Rani-Tirumala Rao machinations? Were the English in it? If the former, it was strongly denied by the Rani many years later; if the latter, the moment chosen (the last week of July 1783) was singularly inept, since Fullarton's army, the only one which could have co-operated, was at that moment heading back to Cuddalore at high speed.

¹ Wilks, *op. cit.* Vol. II, pp. 481-5; Kirmani, *Tipu Sultan*, pp. 19-28.

² But Mohibbul Hasan (pp. 82-4) quotes evidence to show that the English correspondence with Muhammad Ali was a two-way traffic.

TIPU SULTAN, DICTATOR OF MYSORE

The most the conspirators could hope to do—and this they apparently intended—was to release the English prisoners and form them into a corps under General Mathews. For the rest, the plan comprised the capture or death of the Killedar of Seringapatam and as many high Moslem officials as possible, a general Hindu take-over at all levels, down to the villages, and the proclamation of the captive Raja as ruler of Mysore.

The plot miscarried. On the evening of July 27th the Killedar was warned of what was planned for the morrow. The informer, according to Innes Munro, was a European in the Mysore service called Richard Hegan; he was afterwards given command over 500 slaves as his reward.

Suppression was prompt and punishment predictably severe. Many of the conspirators were impaled and the English prisoners saw others dragged to death by elephants, or hanged after having their ears and noses cut off. Shamaïya, the prime mover, was apparently at Mangalore at the time—which suggests a premature detonation—and he was sent back to Seringapatam in fetters. He and his brother were placed in iron cages and nearly starved. Scurry has a ferocious gloss on this. He declares that nine such cages were placed in front of the Treasury and were soon tenanted by a corresponding number of tigers—one of them, taken in the Curakee (Coorg) jungle, being almost black. Into three of the cages were flung the principal conspirators, 'the Inncevalla, the Buxey and another' and they were devoured all but their heads. The tigers themselves only survived eleven months.

However, the *Journal of an Officer* deposes that on January 27th, 1784 the prisoners watched while the Inchevalla was brought out and publicly flogged 'and his back rubbed with chilleys or red pepper'. Scurry was almost certainly romancing.

The fiasco of this plot makes it highly unlikely that even if Fullarton had fought his way through to Seringapatam, he would have been met by the general Hindu uprising which was his best if not his only chance of success against an advancing and avenging Tipu.

The latter evidently felt that all these broils were safely in the past when he marched out of Mangalore in the early summer of 1784. After dealing with ever-restless Balam (scene of his earliest victory over the Poligar's ladies), he set to work on Coorg. Though

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this small state had a vulnerable frontier of about 100 miles with Mysore, it had never been wholly subdued since Haidar's conquest in 1773, and some of the insurrections had been extremely violent.¹ Usually, however, the approach of regular forces caused rebellion to go to ground for the moment, and that is what happened in 1784. The fortress of Macara, specially built by Haidar to overawe the Coorgs, had been in a state of siege and was virtually ruinous; Tipu re-occupied it and gave it the new name of Zafarabad.

It is during this Coorg expedition that Tipu first displays to us that talent for combining bloodthirsty threats with puritanical moralising that we recognise today as part of the cant of dictatorship. Having appointed a new Governor with full powers of terrorism, he called a public meeting and addressed the people on the polyandrous habits of their race.

Wilks records his speech:

'If,' he said, 'six brothers dwell together in one house, and the elder brother marries, his wife becomes equally the wife of the other five, and the intercourse, far from being disgraceful, is familiarly considered as a national rite. Not a man in this country knows his own father, and the ascendancy of women and the bastardy of children is your common attribute. From the period of my father's conquest of the country, you have rebelled seven times and caused the death of thousands of our troops; I forgive you once more, but if rebellion be ever repeated I have made a vow to God to honour every man in the country with Islam; I will make them aliens to their house and establish them in a distant land, and thus at once extinguish rebellion and plurality of husbands, and initiate them in the more honourable practices of Islam.'²

¹ Unexpectedly enough, a lively and quite detailed diary of an earlier Mysorean campaign against the Coorgs is to be found embedded in *The Journal of an Officer*. It had been kept by an anonymous European soldier, and was lent to the Seringapatam prisoners by the renegade Sergeant Dempster. The period covered is March 14th–Oct. 18th, 1782. The author has a cheerful contempt for what he always calls 'our mob'—some 5,000 irregular troops, matchlock men, *chaylarks* (enslaved and converted Christian boys) and other mixed material, ending up with 'a man with a bow and arrows'. It is not to be wondered at that the 'Coorakees' made rings round them, and though the Mysoreans regularly hanged any rebels they could get their claws on, the expedition collapsed in failure.

² *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 532.

TIPU SULTAN, DICTATOR OF MYSORE

No doubt the manifesto was demurely received, but inside the obsequious turbans bent towards the ground were stored memories of the earlier 'abolition' of polyandry by this man's father, and intentions to continue not only with ancestral marriage customs, but with defiance.

Before a year was out in fact, Tipu felt obliged to execute his threat. The Governor he left behind proved both capricious in policy and dissolute in morals. Led by a certain Momuti Nair, an official whose sister the Governor had abducted, the Coorgs rose in a body, and in no time the Governor found himself shut up and starving within the walls of Zafarabad. Tipu's first move was to send a punitive expedition consisting of a *cushoon* or brigade of regular troops, and 2,000 irregulars under the command of Zain-ul-Abidin Shustari. It is hard not to regard this excellent man as one of the few comic characters in Tipu's sadly humourless history. A younger brother, remarkably enough, of the Nizam's trusted minister, Mir Alam, he seems to have been primarily a scholar and theologian and was the author, among other works, of the *Mu'ayyid-al-Mujahidin*, or book of poetical Friday sermons which Tipu commissioned (see p. 116). But he also compiled a famous military manual called the *Fath-ul-Mujahidin* or 'The Triumph of the Holy Warriors', partly translated into English in 1791 as *The Military Maxims and Observations of Tipoo Sultan*—twenty-two copies found their way to the India Office Library alone.

Partly no doubt on the strength of this text-book, Shustari was given command of the advance guard of the Coorg expedition. But under orders to proceed by forced marches to relieve Zafarabad, he lost his nerve, pleaded ague and a stomach ache (Kirmani), and sent a message to say he thought Tipu had better come at once. Kirkpatrick¹ prints a series of furious letters from Tipu to the holy warrior. One accuses him of having conceived a 'mortal dread of the accursed tribe'; in another, noting that he has only fifteen or twenty cartridges left in each cartouche box out of 63,000 received, Tipu enquires satirically how many of the enemy he has sent to hell by such an expenditure of ammunition. He also reminds him of the rules he (Shustari) had laid down in the 'Fath-ul-Mujahidin' for fighting in close and wooded country—would it not be a good idea to put them into practice?

¹ For William Kirkpatrick, *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan*, see p. 98.

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Of course Tipu knew perfectly well that taunts were useless, that Shustari's 'rules' consisted of sixteen lines of jejune theorising,¹ and that he would have to do the job himself. In late October he entered the forests of Coorg with a strong force which included Lally's French contingent. This time there was no question of a real or feigned submission. The Coorgs put up a dauntless fight, but Tipu quickly relieved Zafarabad and crushed all resistance.

Like game being rounded up by beaters, thousands of the inhabitants were trapped in a vast circle of armed men. The actual number captured in this way is said to have been between 50,000 and 70,000, but controversy turns on how many were actually deported to Mysore. Wilks gives the same total (70,000) as for the captures. Tipu himself, in two letters² written in January 1786, mentions alternative figures of 40,000 and 50,000, but both letters are in a boastful style and were evidently designed to terrorise one and impress the other of his correspondents. Mohibbul Hasan³ dismisses anything like 70,000 deportees as 'preposterous' in relation to the probable population of Coorg at that time—there certainly were plenty of fighting men left to rebel, with undiminished fury, only three years later.

A complicating factor is that before leaving the coast Tipu seems to have arranged a similar wholesale rounding up and deportation of the Malabar Christians, that ancient community which, it will be recalled, had helped Brigadier-General Mathews with a timely loan of rupees. In a note to Letter XLII, Kirkpatrick quotes the *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi* for a flamboyant account of how sealed orders were sent to all Tipu's local commanders and how on a given day, at the hour of morning prayer, 'the whole of the Christians, male and female, without the exception of a single individual, to the number of 60,000, were made prisoner' and sent off to Seringapatam. In each case we are told that the males were enrolled in special companies of the *Ahmadi* or corps of prisoners of war (the *chayacks* or *chelas* familiar to readers of *Captives of*

¹ According to Kirkpatrick (Appendix I), Shustari pictured a corps advancing two abreast through a wood and being attacked on both flanks. The men of the rear platoon were to return the enemy fire and then to divide and to pass in single file on each side of the column until they reached the head of it; the other platoons to follow suit.

² Kirkpatrick, *Letters*, CXCVI, CCII.

³ P. 86, n. 26. The first official census of Coorg in 1839-40 showed only 81,437 inhabitants—admittedly for a somewhat smaller area than in 1784.

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Tipu), and it seems that some were also 'honoured with Islam' (i.e. circumcised and converted, forcibly or otherwise, into Moslems).

There is a suspicious parallelism about these episodes; all that one can say is that at that period Tipu was not so short of manpower that he is likely to have burdened himself with some 130,000 bitterly hostile Coorgs and Christians, and that the scale, though not the fact, of the deportations is greatly open to question.

To replace the exiled Coorg families—predominantly farmers—Mysorean settlers were imported, but the scheme was no more successful than most 'plantations' of the kind. The immigrants grumbled at the climate, were doubtless chivvied by the Coorgs, and gradually drifted home.

Between the two Coorg campaigns of 1784 and 1786, and whenever he had a little leisure during the rest of the decade, Tipu busied himself with the routines of government and with the innovations and experiments which are the special mark of his reign. Like many a twentieth-century ruler of an 'underdeveloped' country, he combined a distrust and even hatred for the overweening Westerners with a determination to bend their technology to his own needs. At the simplest level, he was fascinated by their gadgets. In 1767, as the teenage scourge of the Madras suburbs, he saw in the house of a French merchant called Debonnaire, a fine microscope, which he passionately desired. One of Haidar's high officials, billeted in the house, would not let him take it, but he eventually received the coveted instrument as a gift. Grown up, he continued to delight in such things, though his letters¹ to M. Cossigny, Governor of Pondicherry, who had sent him a barometer, suggest that he imagined it would only work properly with this year's mercury, and that if a sick man laid his hand on it, it would also take his temperature.

These are trivia, but in his measures to modernise Mysore's industries and to introduce new ones, Tipu was largely sensible and completely sincere. Artificers and mechanics were sifted out from among his prisoners of war and set to work if they were

¹ Kirkpatrick, *Letters*, CCCXVII and CCCXXXV of Dec. 28th, 1786, and CCCCXXXV of Feb. 14th, 1787. The story of the microscope is in Maistre de la Tour (*op. cit.*), p. 202.

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willing or could be coerced; others—adventurers wandering at large in the peninsula—engaged themselves to him for money; a third source was the countries with whom he was or hoped to be in treaty.

As so often with Tipu there is a certain unreality, a certain arbitrariness, in some of his requests to foreign governments for specific numbers of artisans. Why, for example, in Article 11 of the formal proposals which he sent to the French Directory at the very end of his life did he ask for ‘four founders of brass, four founders of iron cannon, four paper makers, twelve manufacturers of glass, in different branches of the manufacture, two naval engineers, and two good shipbuilders’? Especially as cannon-founding, paper-making, glass-manufacture and ship-building were precisely the industries which he had already got into working order in Mysore as the result of similar requests years previously?

In probing such puzzles, we are fortunate in having, for the early part of Tipu’s reign, a solid chunk of evidence from his own pen—or at any rate from his mouth via the pens of amanuenses. In the year 1811 were published *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan*, translated from the Persian by Colonel William Kirkpatrick, Military Secretary to the Governor-General (Wellesley), at the time of the fall of Seringapatam. Among the large collection of documents captured there, had been what Kirkpatrick describes as the ‘fragments’ of a register kept by Tipu of all his correspondence. The fragments were certainly substantial, since some 2,000 letters came into Kirkpatrick’s hands. At the time of publishing his book he had translated about half, and from these he selected 435 for printing either wholly or in part.¹

Hundreds of other Tipu letters have, of course, been preserved—notably his voluble correspondence with British and French officials in India and with Powers overseas—but they have never been brought together, and it will be an important day for Indian historical studies when some scholar, carrying on from where Kirkpatrick left off so prematurely a century and a half ago, sets to work on an annotated edition of ‘The Complete Correspondence of Tipu Sultan’.

¹ Kirkpatrick contributed a further forty-four translations to the *Asiatic Annual Register* for 1810–11. They mainly relate to the year 1789, and I quote them as *Kirkpatrick Supp.*

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Meanwhile, it is a happy chance that the great bulk of Kirkpatrick's collection relates to the very period we are discussing in this chapter. The letters start on February 17th 1785. We are given 192 for that year and 230 for 1786; the remaining twelve belong to the first six weeks of 1787. To the majority of them, the translator appends valuable 'observations' of his own.

Thus we have the mind and action of Tipu presented to us in concentrated form at the earliest moment that he was able to exercise the full civil as well as military power in Mysore.

That the letters are substantially his own work there can be little doubt. Whatever the subject, whoever the recipient, they are identical in character—the thought clear and sharp, the tone peremptory, not a trace of 'Persian' circumlocution. Very rarely there are courteous or even affectionate modes of address to favoured subordinates, but the same summary treatment is meted out to all. Nor need we be surprised that some of them deal with trifling and even absurd minutiae. Tipu was by nature a centralist. He liked to know everything that was going on and to display his awareness of it; to air his wisdom in every situation; to exercise authority over all his subjects, high and low. He remains completely himself whether instructing his generals in strategy, prescribing for Krishna Rao's dog bite or Dowlat Khan's stone in the bladder, arranging for school-children to be taught encomiastic odes about himself or for the miscreant Moona Kool to be crucified, making sure that the army's best bullocks get their seer of curdled cream a day, curbing Mohyudden Ali Khan's senile craze for dancing and Arshed Beg's undignified commerce with a courtesan, or writing from the battle front for school books for his sons.

It is because this strong personal flavour comes through at every point in the file that we can give credence to those sections of it bearing on Tipu's economic policy. At a superficial reading, he seems particularly at home in matters of foreign trade. A high proportion of his letters are to his agents overseas, above all in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea areas. Mysore had 'factories' at Muscat and Jeddah, and one of the objectives of his Constantinople Embassy of 1786 was to obtain exclusive trading rights in the port of Bassora (Basra).

A ruler with whom Tipu got on specially well was the Imam of Muscat. There are several letters to him, and more to Mir Kasim,

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the Mysorean Commercial Consul there. Taken individually, they show sound commercial sense: pretend not to have any black pepper or sandal wood until the selling price has gone up twenty-five or thirty pagodas, but dispose of the cardamums rather than let them lose weight by drying; if you cannot get sapphires, send us some of this rock salt¹ you are so keen about; speed up the turn round of the trading ships—two days to discharge and two to load should be enough, and if it takes longer you will personally have to pay demurrage . . .

Yet as in the matter of obtaining artisans from abroad, a closer look brings doubts. There is the same touch of aimless repetitiveness. Letter after letter goes off (sometimes several the same day) demanding pearls and pearl-fishers, silkworms and silkworm-rearers, saffron seeds, sulphur and fine asses—and of course the inevitable ‘ten shipwrights’.² No doubt the men at the other end knew how to handle a flurry of demands for instant exports, but the impression is left of a dictator with a passion for paper-work rather than a man of business.

On the other hand, the twentieth century cannot reproach Tipu if he sometimes put politics before commercial logic. He was most generous with facilities (including wholesale duty exemptions) for Arab or Armenian traders wishing to use his ports, but was rigorous in banning commerce which could benefit those he regarded as his enemies. One of his obsessions was that English or Portuguese adventurers might turn up on the Malabar coast posing as Muscat merchants, and he finally told the Imam he would admit no one without a passport from the local Mysore representative. This may not have had a serious effect on Tipu’s balance of payments, but similar restrictions on inland trade were a different matter. Mysore’s natural links were with the countries below the Ghats, particularly the Nawab’s territories and the Coromandel coast. Tipu was quite prepared to cut off his own nose

¹ Amusingly enough, he writes at once to another correspondent—*what is rock salt?*

² Apart from attention to his mercantile marine, Tipu had naval ambitions, destined never to be realised. As late as 1796 he was ordering the construction of twenty ships of the line and a similar number of frigates; the Fleet Regulations issued at the same time (Kirkpatrick, Appendix K), covering everything from timber measurements to the officers’ horse allowance, illustrate Tipu’s tendency to acquire more information than he could digest, as well as the growing self-deception of his later years.

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to spite Muhammad Ali's face, and though towards the end his edicts were surreptitiously defied, one doubts whether all the encouragement he gave to new enterprises made up for his disruption of the traditional patterns of commerce.¹

In addition to the 'heavy industries'—metal-work, ship-building—already referred to, Tipu saw the value of luxury goods in the India of his day. He was serious about those silkworms and those pearls. Like James I of England and many another monarch, he was fascinated with the possibilities of a footing in the lucrative silk trade, and went to great lengths to obtain one. Kirkpatrick is sparing in praise of Tipu—in fact it is reasonable to say that he had a powerful prejudice against him—but he appends to a letter of September 27th, 1786 an admiring comment on 'the coolness and activity of the Sultan's mind' when, from his tent on the eve of a general engagement with the Marathas, he sends the Killedar at Seringapatam detailed instructions for the reception and care of a batch of silkworms.

Altogether, twenty-one stations for this culture were set up, and on his 1800 tour, to which further reference will be made, Dr. Buchanan found a number of the mulberry trees still flourishing. But it is only in quite recent times that the industry really got on its feet; today, it has justified Tipu's foresight and placed Mysore at the head of India's silk-producing states.

The plan for a pearl fishery off Mangalore seems to have ended in failure, and even the fine asses from Arabia did not fulfil Tipu's aim of breeding a better race of mules—the prejudices of his subjects were too strong.

So we go forward into Tipu's reign with a considerable question mark hanging over his acumen—as distinct from his incisiveness—as ruler and commercial strategist. There are many innovations still to come, and we must also give him time to reveal his ideas on local administration, which in Indian terms meant predominantly the collection of revenue.

Although Tipu himself was able to spend most of the year 1785 in the humming hive of his capital, this did not mean that Mysore was at peace with all the world. It is the iron truth that the

¹ The fact that his veto on trade with the English was in direct defiance of Article 8 of the Treaty of Mangalore did not deter him in the slightest.

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circumstances of his father's rise to power and his own will to keep his heritage intact doomed Tipu for life to an unstable relationship with his Indian neighbours, especially, of course, those who had lost territory to or claimed tribute from Mysore. For the Western student of his career it may seem predestined that his fate should turn on events below the Ghats—in the Carnatic, in Travancore or on the Malabar coast—yet with wisdom he could have kept his footing there, however precariously. The real weakness of Mysore lay in the equivocal status of its ruling dynasty vis-à-vis the Nizam and the Marathas and the vulnerability of its frontiers with them.

This is well illustrated by the clash with which the year 1785 opened. The town and fortress of Nargund lay in the midst of a highly debatable piece of territory in the angle made with the Krishna River by its southward-branching tributary the Tungabhadra. Originally Maratha country, Mysorean sovereignty over it was recognised in a 1780 deal between Haidar Ali and the Peshwa (or rather his Minister, Nana Fadnavis). This was sudden, and the Desai or ruler of Nargund continued privately to regard the Peshwa as his overlord, and even made anti Tipu overtures to the English. With the Treaty of Mangalore out of the way, Tipu felt it was time to mend his northern fences, and an obvious first step was to eliminate an unreliable vassal like the Desai.

Accordingly, in the opening days of 1785 he ordered his brother-in-law, Burhan-ud-din, to reduce Nargund. In spite of sharp resistance he managed to seize the town, but the Desai, watching the horizon for the dust of a Maratha rescue force, barricaded himself into the fort. Nana Fadnavis was not quite ready for a campaign against Tipu, so the initiative was taken by the warlike chief Parashuram Bhau, who sent a force of 10,000 men to raise the siege. Burhan tried to settle the issue by two direct assaults before the Marathas arrived, but he failed, and had to draw off to a prudent distance. Negotiations for a peaceful settlement broke down, so now Tipu dispatched a further army under Qamar-ud-din to hold Parashuram Bhau in play.

And this may be the moment to note the extraordinary degree to which Tipu kept his higher command 'in the family'. Qamar-ud-din, as we saw in Chapter 2, was the son of Mir Ali Raza Khan, brother of Tipu's mother, Fakhr-un-Nissa and himself a trusted officer in the dynasty's service until he was killed at Porto Novo.

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Another nephew of Fakhr-un-Nissa was Mir Muid-ud-din, whom (as Saiyid Saheb) we met clinched with the Commissioners on the road to Mangalore—he continued to fight Tipu's battles to the end. Burhan-ud-din, on the other hand, was the brother of Tipu's own wife, Ruqayya Banu. Further out on the periphery were Burhan's father-in-law Budr-uz-zaman and Tipu's cousin, Muhammad Raza, to be found in English chronicles under the flippant-sounding but in fact sinister title of 'The Binky Nabob'—*benki* in Canarese means 'fire' and the nickname came from Muhammad Raza's incendiary record in Malabar. At least one of these men, Burhan-ud-din, was a fine soldier, but we may guess that the always suspicious Tipu valued the loyalty above the military talents of his relatives on the female side.

In this instance the two kinsmen Burhan and Qamar failed to hit it off. It was probably unwise to have given them parallel commands instead of placing one or the other at the head. The sequel was a stream of letters from their mighty relative imploring them to work together, and a further reprieve for the Desai of Nargund. However, as the Marathas had been easily beaten off, the final result was certain. Terms for a capitulation were agreed and at the end of July the garrison marched out. In spite of having been promised their freedom on payment of an indemnity, the Desai and his Chief Minister, along with their families, were shipped off in chains to the dreaded fortress prison of Kabbal-durga.

Such was the overture. Tipu had had envoys at Poona all through the Nargund episode and negotiations of a shadow-boxing kind dragged on while Nana perfected his scheme for an anti-Mysore confederacy, to include all the Maratha chiefs and the Nizam. The latter still nourished many an old grievance against Tipu and his father, and though he was as usual a vague and slippery ally, a prolonged meeting between him and Nana at the close of 1785 did produce a united plan to invade Mysore.

Hostilities opened on May 1st, 1786. For a time the confederacy prospered and by the middle of the year nearly all the territory between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra had been wrestled from the generals of Tipu. The latter had been busy with Coorg affairs, and it was not until the month of June that he managed to assemble a strong army at Bangalore. Everyone assumed that his

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first aim would be to relieve Burhan-ud-din, hard-pressed in the Bednur country. Instead, with a stroke worthy of his father, he marched due north against the city of Adoni. No better lightning conductor could have been devised. Adoni was not merely the Nizam's main stronghold south of the Tungabhadra, but was the family headquarters of his nephew Mahabat Jung, son of our old acquaintance Basalat Jung. So now it was panic stations on the confederate side. Hyderabad and Maratha armies to the number of 60,000 were summoned from all quarters and away they went to save Adoni.

Meanwhile Tipu, after refusing to be bought off by Mahabat, attempted a storm. Though, according to the usual pattern, he carried the town, he received a bloody repulse from the citadel. As the relieving forces approached he had to draw back, but with the quiet certainty that Adoni would shortly be his. The seasonal spates were at hand; the confederates had no local supply depots and if they remained south of the Tungabhadra when it rose they would be trapped. Sure enough, on July 2nd Adoni was evacuated, and when Tipu marched in he found the fortress, the palace and even the furnishings of the zenana intact.

By all the rules of war, the Nizam and the Marathas should now have been safe behind their river line until the end of the monsoon. But again Tipu showed the spirit of his father. As Haidar had once marched his men naked through a Malabar rainstorm, what time his French auxiliaries struck terror into the enemy by advancing under umbrellas, so Tipu now led his troops straight down to the banks of the raging Tungabhadra and got them across in coracles. These 'basket boats', as they are usually described, were standard equipment with the Mysore army. Two men carried the bamboo skeleton and a third the skin to be stretched over it; the boats took only a quarter of an hour to assemble, and would carry twenty-five men or a piece of cannon.¹ They served Tipu well at this crisis.

Being thus astride the Tungabhadra, the Mysorean forces could

¹ Maistre de la Tour, from whom this description is taken, adds that 'the editor of the *Memoirs of General Lawrence* makes fifty horses enter one of these boats, but the fact is false; the horse swims and the horseman, who is in the boat, holds the bridle'. The English themselves took over the idea; nothing could be more characteristic of the future Duke of Wellington than a memorandum on exactly how to build and transport basket boats, by Major-General Arthur Wellesley, dated March 27th, 1803 (*Supplementary Despatches*, Vol. IV).

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move steadily and securely south-westwards along both banks, and the unwieldy host of the confederates could not prevent them from reclaiming most of the territories over-run by the Marathas a few months before. Tipu's particular objective was the fortress town of Savanur. This was a political as well as a strategic prize. With the usual aim of securing Mysore's northern marches, Haidar had in 1779 contrived a double marriage tie with Abdul Hakim, the Pathan Nawab of Savanur—each gave a daughter in marriage to a son of the other (in Haidar's case, his younger son Karim). But Tipu and the Nawab fell out and now Abdul Hakim was in the front line as an ally of the Marathas. They failed to support him, and on the last day of October he fled from his capital. The booty was vast and as at Adoni the Nawab had to leave all his household stuff behind, including (as Kirmani pleasantly records) 'fifty turbans of the Boorhanpoor chintz kind, hung upon pegs on the wall, and honorary dresses of great splendour and value, of the same colour corresponding to the turbans, under cloth covers or in packages', together with carpets so large that each was a load for an elephant.

So far, almost every trick to Tipu, and there were more victories to come. But not victory itself. As 1786 turned into 1787, Tipu realised that he could never conquer the Marathas, however often he might beat them in the field, and he could not continue to campaign indefinitely beyond the northern borders of his kingdom. Peace feelers were put out and after the usual prolonged chaffering a treaty was signed between Mysore and the Marathas (April 1787). The Nizam, who had long since faded out of the struggle, was not mentioned in the Treaty, though his nephew Mahabat Jung got Adoni back. It may not be quite true to say, as Mohibbul Hasan does, that Tipu won the war, but he certainly seems to have lost the peace. Almost all his captured towns and fortresses were returned to their former owners, and Mysore had to pay the heavy arrears of tribute due under the settlement of 1780.

On his way back to Seringapatam, Tipu relieved his feelings by severely punishing a couple of poligars whom he suspected of disloyalty. The next act in the restless drama of his life was now preparing below the Ghats, but the prologue to it had long since been played in distant England.

The Coming of Cornwallis

THE question before the House of Commons was this: should the Court of Directors of the East India Company be called upon to produce a letter from Calcutta dated November 25th, 1783? Mr. Francis thought they should, as it might show what grounds the Court had for believing that 'peace would very soon be made with Tippoo Sultan and be thereby completely established all over India'. He (Mr. Francis) had later advices which suggested that this was by no means a certainty.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt objected—he was surprised that a gentleman who had had so much experience in Company affairs should call for the divulging of papers which might materially affect negotiations in India. Mr. Dundas concurred, but Mr. Francis argued that if the conclusion of peace was as near in November 1783 as the Bengal letter implied, no harm could be done by producing it now.¹

He had a case. For the little wrangle between Philip Francis and William Pitt over this point of official secrecy was taking place on the evening of June 16th, 1784, two months and five days after the Treaty of Mangalore had been signed. Argument or conjecture about the prospects of peace with Tipu continued all through July, and it was not until August 9th that a letter announcing the signature and giving the terms of the Treaty was laid before the House. It was dated April 7th and had been received, overland,² on August 2nd.

Even this was exceptionally good going. In the course of his argument Francis remarked that any news of the progress of peace talks would certainly take eight or nine months before their own deliberations would be reported in India!

¹ *Narrative of all the Proceedings and Debates in the Houses of Parliament on East India Affairs in the Present Session* (London, Bladon, 1784).

² It was sometimes possible, though risky, to speed things up a little by sending mail via the Persian Gulf and the Levant. On Dec. 28th, 1786, Lord Cornwallis writes from Calcutta of having received 'some straggling letters' written about the middle of July—the rest had been 'cut off by some wild Arab between Aleppo and Bussora'.

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A somewhat farcical episode, but with dangerous overtones, now that the Company was exercising a species of delegated sovereignty in India and its policies called for national decision-making of a most crucial kind. Leadenhall Street and Westminster remained at the mercy not only of this drowsy rhythm of communication, but of a hopelessly dislocated time-scheme. However much events accelerated in India—and by the 1780s they were often torrential—and however urgent the enquiries from London, it made no difference to the speed of a sailing ship plugging round the Cape with dispatches in the skipper's safe.

The problem would have been awkward enough if the Company could trust its proconsuls, and Parliament and people could trust the Company. But in fact the situation had worsened in every respect since the Regulating Act of 1773. The dissension we have seen between Warren Hastings as Governor-General and Macartney as Governor of Madras was only a small sample of the Act's failure to put the administration of the Indian Presidencies on a workable basis. At home, East India House, where for decades a tame General Court of Proprietors had done no particular harm by continuing to elect and re-elect a comfortable proportion of the blind, the deaf and the senile to its twenty-four-man Board of Directors, had now become a cockpit of faction, with the money power of returned 'nabobs' pitted against the political arts of peers and M.P.s, hungry for prestige and patronage. Westminster in turn offered no immediate hope of reform from Lord North's Government worn down by the American war and harried from across the floor by ferocious critics of the East India Company and all its works.

Yet North battled on, and when his administration fell in March 1782, it was only a year until he surfaced again—as the coalition partner of Fox. One of the earliest moves of this strange alliance was to bring in a new India Bill. It might be thought that almost anything would improve on the chaos left behind by the 1773 Act. But Fox managed to wreck the chances of his measure—and the very life of the coalition—by what seemed to be a deliberate grab at the much-coveted Indian patronage. That at any rate is how his critics interpreted his plan for a Board of Commissioners, nominated by the Government of the day but holding office for a fixed term of years, which would have complete control over the Company as a political entity, over all its

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appointments, and over its proconsuls in the East. Among those who deeply disapproved was King George III, and it was this tremendous (and seldom repeated) ferment in Indian affairs that led to his famous intervention when the Bill reached the House of Lords. The Fox-North coalition collapsed (December 1783) and thus the passing of new Indian legislation into law fell at last to William Pitt the Younger.

Thanks to Pitt's large majority and the influence of a sultry summer, in which the hectic eloquence of Burke and the nagging of Philip Francis over such trivia as that November 25th letter were insufficient to keep the Government front bench awake, the India Act of 1784 went through with scarcely a ripple. The features of it which mainly concern us were: a board of Commissioners (later known as the Board of Control) was created which, in contrast with Fox's fixed-term oligarchs, was to consist of Privy Councillors headed by a current Secretary of State and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with no say in the Company's patronage; the authority of the Governor-General over the subordinate Presidencies was defined and strengthened; and both he and they were forbidden to declare war, enter into any treaty to make war, or guarantee the possession of any of the 'country powers' without the express permission of the Court of Directors. This provision (Clause 35) was dignified with a special preamble stating that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and the policy of this nation'.

The only exception recognised to the Clause was 'where hostilities have actually been commenced or preparation actually been made for the commencement of hostilities against the British nation in India or against some of the Princes or States dependent thereon, or whose territories the . . . Company shall be at such time engaged by any subsisting Treaty to defend or guarantee'. Clause 35 and its exception were soon to be put to the test.¹

Pitt's Act has sometimes been called dishonest because it left the degree of influence or direction to be exerted by the Board over the Company so ill-defined that further inroads would be

¹ Pitt's Bill, and the events leading up to it, are well summarised in C. H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784-1834* (Manchester University Press, 1940, new ed. 1961).

THE COMING OF CORNWALLIS

difficult to resist. But when the Royal Assent was given in August 1784, it did at least seem that the way must shortly become clear to furnish India with a new Governor-General who would carry out the policy of the Company and—at one remove—that of His Majesty's Government. Even if Hastings still refused to resign and even if (as happened on a former occasion) the Company took his side against the Government, the new Act provided that he could be recalled by the Board of Control.

What the Act did not provide, of course, was any means whereby the day-to-day (or even month-to-month) activities of the Governor-General could be kept in check. The enormous time-lag already referred to remained exactly as it was. So everything came back to the man himself and the trust which could be placed in him. Hitherto Indian proconsulships had been held either by flawed men of genius such as Clive and Warren Hastings or by corrupt mediocrities like those who in turn disgraced the Presidential chair in Madras. Only Macartney pointed the way, however uncertainly, to a new sort of Governor-General. The story of how one was sought and found is instructive.

A name which cropped up with great regularity was that of Charles, Earl Cornwallis. It had first been heard as far back as the year 1778, when Lord North's Ministry was hatching one of its periodical plots to get rid of Warren Hastings. A military appointment was favoured and Cornwallis, who was on leave in England from the American war between January and April of that year, seemed to have the right qualifications. The plan fell through, however, as did a similar effort in August 1781 to unseat Hastings and substitute Cornwallis. But the latter was always considered as *papabile*, and in the autumn of 1782 came the first firm offer. This was during the brief administration of Lord Shelburne, by which time Cornwallis had become a national, if not an international, figure, though in a melancholy context. One of the better generals sent from Britain to take part in the struggle with the American colonists, his surrender at Yorktown on October 19th, 1781 made the outcome of the war almost certain. He was in fact still on parole from that event when he was being so strongly backed for India.

Shelburne fell too soon for any decisive action to be taken, and Cornwallis remained in abeyance, so to speak, until May 1783, when his name was heard in the House of Commons. This time his

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promoter was Henry Dundas, the future driving force of the Board of Control. Though spokesman on India for the Fox-North coalition during the first few months of 1783, he was known to be committed to Pitt and was in no position to work the oracle,¹ but a rumour of some kind reached Macartney in Madras. 'I was surprised to hear Lord Cornwallis mentioned to be Governor-General,' he wrote to his friend, Thomas Allen, on August 10th. 'Good God! it would seem like a scheme to ruin him!' It might be thought that an invitation would soon be reaching Macartney himself from 'my dear Charles', but all that happened during the Fox-North phase was an abortive approach by the titular head of the coalition, the Duke of Portland, to a fellow-Duke, His Grace of Manchester.

Then came Pitt. While Macartney, unaware of course that his friends had fallen, was writing round to assure everyone that the last thing on earth he could wish for was the Governor-Generalship, the new Chief Minister's mind turned once more to Cornwallis, though at this stage as a soldier only. A letter² from Cornwallis (May 9th, 1784) to his devoted aide-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Ross introduces his very personal tone of voice:

The more I turn it in my mind, the less inclination I feel to undertake it. I see no field for extraordinary military reputation, and it appears to me in every light dangerous to the highest degree. To abandon my children and every comfort this side of the grave; to quarrel with the Supreme Government in India, whatever it may be; to find I have neither power to model the army or correct abuses; and finally to run the risk of being beat by some nabob, and being disgraced to all eternity, which from what I have read of their battles seems a very probable thing to happen—I cannot see, in opposition to this, great renown and a brilliant fortune.

¹ Yet Fox paid a warm tribute to Cornwallis, and to Dundas's advocacy of him, when introducing his own India Bill in November 1783.

² All letters to or from and Minutes by Cornwallis are quoted (unless otherwise stated) from *The Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, ed. Charles Ross (London, John Murray, 1859, 3 vols.), where they appear in date order. Original documents in the Public Record Office are quoted under the reference P. R. O. I have also used a few letters which are in the Kent County Record Office, Maidstone.

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Later in the same month it was hinted to him that Pitt might wish to give him the civil as well as the military power and Ross received his further reflections (May 25th):

Inclination cries out at every moment, Do not think of it; reject all offers; why should you volunteer plague and misery? Duty then whispers, You are not sent here to please yourself . . . try to be of use, serve your country and your friends . . . take the means which God has put into your hands . . .

But somehow the proposal hung fire while the India Bill went through, and when the Governor-Generalship came up yet again in November, the Cabinet was divided. Dundas was now a promoter of Macartney, partly (so it was rumoured) because by shunting him from Madras a slot would be found for his own friend, General Sir Archibald Campbell. In spite of this, Pitt at length made a clear-cut offer of the Governor-Generalship to Cornwallis, but he, suspecting that the Cabinet merely wanted to get rid of 'a momentary rub among themselves', said no. Next the handkerchief was thrown to Lord Walsingham, who also declined to pick it up, and now Macartney's was once more the whispered name!

The formal nomination still rested with the East India Company, and on February 1st, 1785 the Court of Directors met to consider it. First to be proposed was one of their own servants and a member of the Bengal Council, Edward Wheler. Negatived by thirteen votes to nine. Macartney followed. A tie—eleven to eleven! Lots were drawn and Macartney got the verdict. But when the news reached him while on a visit to Macpherson in Calcutta, he declined the post, pending certain clarifications, and sailed for England (June 1785).

On his arrival he had an interview with Pitt and Dundas. They were prepared to meet his main objections—insufficient control of the military (a rattle from the bones of Sir Eyre Coote!) and the danger of being over-ruled by his own Council—but a spikier obstacle arose. Lord Macartney's was an Irish title and he thought he should be given an English peerage on taking up his post. This was not the first instance—nor, by Heaven! the last—of a great proconsul's bosom being agitated over the question of Irish and English honours. It had been a grievance of Clive that his much-desired barony turned out to be no more than an Irish one, and

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we shall see the seismic effect which an Irish Marquessate was to have on Richard Wellesley. Pitt, fearing a precedent (and cool in any case towards Macartney), said he must think again. Within four days Cornwallis had been offered full civil and military powers and had decided he could hold off no longer. He agreed to go to India. The luck of Tipu Sultan of Mysore was beginning to turn.

Charles Cornwallis was born on December 31st, 1738, the son of another Charles, the 5th Baron and 1st Earl. He had a Suffolk background—only through a mid-nineteenth-century marriage did the name begin to be known in Kent. The young heir's natural destiny was the Guards and the House of Commons. He entered the former in 1756 and from January 1760 to June 1762 he was M.P. for the family Borough of Eye. Later that year he inherited the Earldom and a seat in the House of Lords. In 1768 came his marriage to a girl with the wholly endearing name of Jemima Tullikens Jones (her great-grandfather had been a Dutch General William Tullekens). They had a son and a daughter, the former being the beloved Charles, Lord Brome, recipient of some of his father's most charming letters. Alas, Jemima died within ten months of her husband's 1778 leave, heartbroken at her separation from him.

Military advancement came quickly to the young Cornwallis—Lieutenant-Colonel at twenty-three, Major-General at thirty-seven, Lieutenant-General in America a year later (February 1776). The traumatic event of his life was, of course, the surrender at Yorktown. Though he was fully exonerated, he was left with that uneasy fear of being 'beat by some nabob' and the final loss of his fighting reputation. This will be important when he comes to ponder the possible aggressions of Mysore.

And so 'much against my will and with grief of heart' he set sail for India on May 6th, 1786, and on August 24th, while Tipu was forcing the passage of the Tungabhadra, he landed at Madras—an unusually quick transit. A few weeks later he moved on to his seat of government, Calcutta. The people of all races who crowded to the riverside to watch their new Governor-General come ashore saw a man whose outward appearance

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matched his mind. He was tall and rubicund, a kindly version of John Bull, his good looks being only marred by 'a slight obliquity of vision', acquired on the hockey fields of Eton and courteously ignored by his portraitists.¹ His corpulence amused him. He wrote home to his son that he no doubt heard about him receiving the Garter 'and very likely laughed at me for wishing to wear a blue riband over my fat belly'. Those who quote the comic phrase do not add what follows—'the reasonable object of ambition to a man is to have his name transmitted to posterity for eminent services rendered to his country and to mankind. Nobody asks or cares whether Hampden, Marlborough, Pelham or Wolfe were Knights of the Garter'.²

Cornwallis had inherited a formidable load of reorganisation and reform in every field, but it is notable that one of his first acts was to get down on paper his views about a matter which might bring him into collision with Tipu Sultan.

It will be remembered that Warren Hastings had never given more than a grumbling acquiescence to the Treaty of Mangalore. When, soon afterwards, war was imminent between Mysore and the Marathas, a hint of English aid to the latter seems to have been held out both by Hastings and his temporary successor, Sir John Macpherson. The Government of Bombay went further and offered Nana Fadnavis the use of three battalions of Company's troops, and though it was stipulated that they must not cross the Mysore frontier, the proposal did seem to add up to a military pact against Tipu.

Cornwallis took a careful look at the whole thing, and an admirable Minute (September 27th, 1786) resulted. While confident that the offer of troops 'proceeded from the warmest anxiety

¹ The only exception was the sculptor Thomas Banks. Asked why, in his Cornwallis statue in Fort St. George, he perpetuated this blemish, he explained that had the cast been inward he would have suppressed it as suggesting a contracted character. 'But as the eyes looking to the right and left at the same moment would impart the idea of an enlarged and comprehensive mind, I have thought it due to the illustrious Governor-General to convey to posterity this natural indication of mental greatness.' (James Morris, *Pax Britannica*, London, Faber 1968). Splendid, but Banks evidently did not know about the hockey stick.

² By the following February he is calling himself 'a Knight and no Knight', his stars, garters and ribbons having all perished with his overland letters. 'Some wild Arab is now making a figure with *Honi soit qui mal y pense* round his knee', he tells Lord Brome (Letter of Feb. 17th, 1787).

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for the public good' he was equally clear that if executed it would: (a) amount to a direct breach of Article 1 of the Treaty of Mangalore, whereby both sides undertook not to help, directly or indirectly, the enemies of each other; (b) contravene the solemn injunction in Pitt's India Act against warlike commitments to the country powers. Charles Malet, who had been appointed British Resident at the Peshwa's Court in March, was much concerned over French intrigues with Nana, but in Cornwallis's view these did not provide anything like the exception allowed for by the Act.

No, there was no getting round it—to send the three battalions would amount to going to war, and the English could not go to war without breaking the law of their country. It was, therefore, high time to extricate themselves from this dangerous situation, which would not only give Tipu 'most just grounds' for offence, but would probably end in a quarrel with the Marathas.

The same day that he signed his Minute, Cornwallis wrote in strictest terms to Malet, warning him that no consideration must compete with that of preserving the faith of treaties and obeying the law. He also hinted (the letter, as we shall see, might reach Nana Fadnavis) that he had such a high opinion of the Maratha power that he could not believe it had any danger to apprehend from such an enemy as Tipu. And to finish with, an inimitable Cornwallis touch: 'Give the strongest assurances to the young Peshwa¹ of my warm attachment to his person, and inform him I have already given orders to search out the largest and smallest elephants in this country, and when found shall beg leave to present them to him.'

Next James Anderson, Resident with Scindhia, the other great Maratha power, was put in the picture with a message (October 2nd) explaining that it was hoped to make his (Cornwallis's) own arrival an excuse for withdrawing from the commitment, and that Malet had been given discretionary power in the use of the letter just sent him. If there was news of any aggression by Tipu against the English or their allies it was to be withheld completely, while

¹ He was about eleven years of age at this time. It is rather sad that Cornwallis's kindly gesture misfired, as the vakil in charge of the large elephant was frightened of it, and left it behind. Nana Fadnavis thought the Peshwa had been double-crossed, and maybe Cornwallis did not choose the most consolatory form of words when he wrote back that the elephant had been welcomed home with joy by its old master 'and is at this moment reckoned one of the finest elephants in Oudh'.

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if there was a prospect of successful peace talks between him and the Marathas, it was to be withheld as long as feasible without Malet being 'driven to give an evasive answer or to convey to the Marathas the smallest hope of assistance'.

Neither of these eventualities happened, and on November 29th Malet had his crucial meeting with Nana Fadnavis. The latter was inclined to accuse the English of duplicity, but Malet handled him with great skill and the discussion ended on a conciliatory note. So the Governor-General had skirted round his first pitfall, but the episode shows his extreme caution, from the very start, over anything which might bring him into collision with the military power of Mysore. Before moving on to the next crisis, which could not be evaded so easily, it is worth considering how the English of 1786 looked upon that power, and more particularly upon the energetic Prince who wielded it.

Tipu Sultan was heir to a father whose quality of greatness was unmistakable. It could be, and was, acknowledged by many who probably boggled at Edmund Burke's eulogy (published in that same 1783 issue of *The Annual Register* in which he denounced the Massacre of Anantpur, and with the same motive—blackening the face of Warren Hastings). This hailed Haidar as 'indubitably one of the greatest princes as well as the greatest warrior that India ever produced . . . mild and equitable . . . one of the first politicians of his day'.

When Tipu appeared, there was at first a distinct prejudice in his favour. Lord Macartney transferred Burke's reverential esteem to the rising star. In his view 'the youthful and spirited heir of Hyder, without the odium of his father's vices, or his Tyranny, seems by some popular acts and the hopes which a new reign inspires, and by the adoption of European discipline likely to become an even more formidable opponent than his father'.¹

Since then the military record of the Mysorean armies had at least been maintained; the Company had sadly little to set against Bednur and Mangalore, and Tipu had just proved that he could take on the Marathas and the Nizam single-handed, and not come off second best.

In the diplomatic field, Tipu had shown a pertinacity which brought substantial rewards. And while even Lord Macartney soon lost any optimistic belief in his good intentions or good faith,

¹ *Madras Military Consultations*, Dec. 14th, 1782.

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the maxim (which had originated with Clive) that a strong, but not too strong, Mysore was essential to the balance of power in India, had not yet given way to that other—'Tipu must be destroyed'.

In addition, however, to his defiance of the Marathas and the Nizam, Tipu's most recent actions gave cause for unease. They had that touch of gigantism which in homely English is rendered 'swelled head'. An early symptom occurred in January 1786, when it was suddenly proclaimed to a great gathering in the Lal Bagh mosque that Tipu's name was to be substituted for the Emperor Shah Alam's in the Friday sermon or Khutbah, and that in future he would be referred to by the title of *Padshah* (King). We have already recorded how Zain-ul-Abidin Shustari was called upon to compile a set of these political sermons, 104 in number, each ending with a reference to the Jihad, or Holy War against the infidels. These were read out, Friday after Friday, in thousands of mosques wherever Tipu's writ ran.

In one of his letters dated a few months later,¹ he puts his case for the change with brutal candour. Praise God and the Prophet, he says, and after them the Prince who is acting as the Protector of the Faith. He continues:

As to those idiots who at this time introduce the name of Shah Allum into the Khutbah, they act through ignorance, since the real condition of the above-mentioned is this, that he is actually enslaved and a mere cypher; being the servant of Scindeah at the monthly wages of 15,000 rupees. Such being the case, to pronounce the name of a dependent of infidels, in reciting the Khutbah, is a manifest sin.

Remedy suggested: to pronounce his own as often as possible.

Tipu's first bid for wider recognition as Padshah came during the peace negotiations with the Marathas, but Nana Fadnavis would have none of it—'Tipu Sultan Khan Bahadur' was the most he would concede.

It seems hard to credit that the most grandiose diplomatic gesture of Tipu's life, which was now about to intensify the suspicions of the English, sprang also from his longing for status. Yet Mohibbul Hasan assures us² that the main task of the famous

¹ Kirkpatrick, *Letters*, CCCXXI to Kutub-ud-din Khan (Aug. 1st, 1786).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 132. In his recent edition of the *Waqai-i Manazil-i Rum* (London, Asia Publishing Co., for Aligarh Muslim University, 1969), he lays rather more

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embassy which was sent to Constantinople in this same year of 1786 was to extract from the Sultan—the Grand Caliph of Islam—a *firman* acknowledging Tipu Sultan as the legal ruler of Mysore, and that it was in this sense successful. The argument is that Tipu (unlike his father, who at least received the title of Subadar of Sira from the Mughul Emperor) needed the Caliph's sanction before assuming the attributes of royalty which, as we shall see, he got ready to do when the remnants of his embassy returned nearly four years later. But the fact that the Ambassadors' brief included a request for a body of Turkish mercenaries, and that their original instructions were to proceed from Constantinople to Paris with proposals for a Mysore–French treaty, reveals a wider intention to seek allies and supporters against the hated English.

The chosen envoys to Constantinople were Ghulam Ali Khan (Plate 9), Lutf Ali Beg, in action since long before the 1767 Malabar campaign, Nurullah Khan, and Jafar Khan. Once again Tipu's own letters give us many amusing sidelights on their setting forth. He was in a state of nervous excitement over them; in fact he fussed. From December 1785 onwards his instructions and enquiries rained down. Why are you proposing to take 1,500 wax candles as well as bulk wax? You can't need so many! What if the Aumil of Mangalore *is* supplying you with old and blackened rice? Accept it and don't argue. Ghulam Ali Khan has got sore feet? Well, we have found the camphor tree growing in this part of the country—here are two bottles of the essential oil, let him rub his feet with it and put it in his soup. Your elephants have been going *must*? Try flogging those sons of whores the mahouts and if any elephant still remains 'hot', ship it separately. Above all, don't keep writing to me about your squabbles—your job is to go to *Constantinople*. . . .

Eventually they went, about 1,000 men (including some pilgrims) embarking in four small ships on March 9th, 1786. Not all were willing travellers, judging by the fact that the military escort and their hangers-on had themselves to be sent down to the quayside under guard and there were desertions and mutinies later. The original plan was that the Ambassadors would travel via the Red Sea and Egypt, but in the end they sailed to Basra at the head of

stress on commercial motives. The *Waqai*, a diary of the Ambassadors' journey as far as Basra, was compiled by a member of their staff, Khwaja Abdul Qadir.

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the Persian Gulf, and thence up the Shatt-el-Arab to the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. Here they were to transfer into river boats for the next stage to Baghdad and finally to cover the last 1,000 miles or so overland. The programme was achieved, though with mounting disasters and delays. At least fifty lives were lost when one ship caught fire and sank in the Gulf and later two of the remaining three vessels foundered off Basra; the Mission's commercial manager, Muhammad Hanif, died of fever; and all four elephants (one intended to be sold to defray expenses, the others to be gifts to the Caliph and the Kings of France and England!) perished in various ways.

At Basra, where they arrived on August 22nd, the travellers were detained for over five months—a typical Ottoman chicane about the issue of authorisations—and it was April 25th, 1787, before Baghdad was reached. Thenceforward, Ghulam Ali Khan had to be carried every yard of the overland route to Constantinople in a palanquin—Tipu's camphor rub had done nothing to cure that trouble in his feet. The wayworn party finally got to their destination in late September, but even now there was a further lengthy pause before the Caliph would grant audience. While waiting, the Ambassadors put a number of propositions to the Grand Vizier, including an offer of trade facilities at Mangalore, in exchange for similar facilities at Basra. Nothing whatever came of these. The interview with the Caliph, when at last it took place, was purely formal, and though Tipu's representatives enjoyed some handsome entertainments and got their *firman*, they eventually left for home with nothing else to show and their numbers fearfully diminished by plague and bitter weather.

The return journey was made via Alexandria, the Nile, Suez and Jeddah, whence the Ambassadors performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Dexterously turning aside the demand of the Sherif of Mecca for a forced loan, they took ship for Calicut, arriving on December 29th, 1789, the very day of the Mysore army's repulse from the Travancore Lines (p. 127). Of the 1,000 who set out, sixty-eight got back. Tipu was withering in his criticisms of the leader, Guhlam Ali, who had indeed revealed some defects in temper and judgement, but he himself deserves a share of whatever blame attaches to an over-ambitious project.

Meanwhile the separate Embassy intended for France had left in July 1787, under the leadership of an official called Osman

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Khan and with Pierre Monneron, a well-known Pondicherry merchant, as guide.¹ Though delayed from time to time by illness or adverse winds, the party met with none of their colleagues' misadventures and got safely to Toulon on June 9th, 1788. They were received with the usual marks of esteem, and with much effervescent curiosity about the turbanned strangers from Mysore.² That they made a 'hit' is shown by the rapid appearance of pamphlets with such titles as *Conversation de l'Ambassadeur de Tippoo-Saib avec son Interprète* (Paris, 1788), the theme of which was of course the state of France, not of Mysore! Progenitors, in fact, of *La Nouvelle Épiphanie*. Among the subsequent attractions laid on was a trip to Brest to see the launching of the *Duguay Truon* 74, a singular link between Tipu Sultan's reign and our own time; she was captured by the English after Trafalgar, was renamed *Implacable* and survived as a training ship (first at Falmouth, then at Portsmouth) until 1949. But as happened at Constantinople, the royal audience granted at Versailles on August 3rd extracted nothing from Louis XVI beyond vague promises of military help. And indeed, with the fall of the Bastille only eleven months away, Tipu was paying court to a sinking star.

However, the Ambassadors, like other delegations to France before and since, found that the glamour of Paris more than made up for diplomatic failure. They enjoyed themselves so much, in fact, that they could not tear themselves away till all their money was gone, and they had to raise a loan before they could re-embark. They got back to Pondicherry just six months ahead of the Constantinople party. With them they brought one of those groups of craftsmen and technicians for whom Tipu invariably asked—also (according to Punganuri³) a physician better endowed with skill than tact. Having felt Tipu's pulse he

¹ Both men had been chosen with care. Osman Khan was an old confidant of Haidar Ali, and had carried out an exploratory mission to Constantinople in 1784. Monneron had already acted as intermediary between Tipu and the French authorities in the East.

² For all the picturesque detail, see the Rev. A. M. Tabard, 'Tippu Sultan's Embassy at the French Court' (Bangalore, *Journal of the Mythic Society*, January 1917). Political aspects are well summarised by V. G. Hatakhar, 'Tipu Sultan's Embassy to France' (*Indian Historical Records Commission*, Vol. 33, 1958), using the French National Archives.

³ *Op. cit.*

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announced, 'You are likely to become more bilious and your mind will be deranged'. Re-exported to France on the first ship.

While these expeditions were, as he hoped, spreading his name and fame among the nations, the ruler of Mysore was busy with another enterprise which heightened the unease of Cornwallis and his advisers. After the Maratha war ended in the middle of 1787, Tipu had a bare six months of peaceful pursuits at Seringapatam before setting off for one more sweep through Malabar. Just previous to his death, Haidar Ali had appointed as Governor there, with full military and civil authority, a certain Arshed Beg Khan. Tipu kept him on, in spite of his unsatisfactory sex life (p. 99), but unable to leave well alone, decided in 1786 to extend to Malabar his hobby of the moment, the separation of powers. Arshed Beg remained as military Governor only, while Mir Ibrahim (a relative of Shustari) took over civil affairs. His exactions and cruelties infuriated everyone, and it was at Arshed Beg's suggestion that Tipu now descended on Malabar to try and put things right. Mir Ibrahim was arrested and jailed, but capriciously enough Tipu deposed Arshed Beg also, and that upright man died in prison, broken-hearted. As, for a wonder, there was no rebellion actually in progress, Tipu was now able to concentrate on such tasks as the creation of a new revenue system; a proclamation to the Nairs (similar to his Coorg broadside of two years before), calling on them to abandon their 'obscene' marriage customs; and the destruction of Calicut in favour of a new capital to be called Farukhabad. He also made a start with Malabar's first road network.

Woodcock¹ is probably right in saying that Tipu, as an ardent Moslem with a Puritan streak, was genuinely shocked by the excesses of the Brahmin-dominated caste system which he found in Malabar, and by the *mores* of the inhabitants, and did what he could to improve the lot of the lower castes. This no doubt accounted for the large number of 'conversions' which took place; once circumcised, the low-caste man instantly became the equal, at least in theory, of every follower of the Prophet, from Tipu downwards. On the other hand the panic-stricken flight of more

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 177.

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than 30,000 Brahmins to Travancore indicates that there was also a 'reign of terror' element in Tipu's progress through the Malabar states.

Next Tipu went off to visit Saiyid Saheb, comfortably settled in his jagir of Dindigul, and took advantage of the visit to 'chastise' certain poligars between that place and Coimbatore who he felt were lacking in due submission. By August 1788 he was back in Seringapatam, but his re-ascent of the Ghats was a signal for all Malabar, and Coorg as well, to hatch rebellion. The flames burst out in November. Tipu's first move was to send a punitive force under Lally, but he soon followed in person and the usual process of hunting down the Nairs and other resisters began.

It is needless, from the point of view of our main theme, to pursue the cheerless details of Tipu Sultan's successive campaigns against those whom he regarded—with varying degrees of validity—as his subjects. His own letters bear witness to his ruthlessness.¹ This latest drive in Malabar is only relevant in that it did at last bring him into direct conflict with Cornwallis.

The latter's beliefs about the likelihood and timing of such a clash had gone through several stages. During his first year at Calcutta, he seems to have regarded an attack by Tipu as imminent. 'I wish with all my heart,' he wrote to the Hon. Charles Stuart on September 5th, 1787, 'that my apprehensions could be quiet regarding the Carnatic'. Six weeks later, having realised where the true zone of peril lay, he affirmed to Sir John Shore his determination to protect the Raja of Travancore, as one of Britain's allies, and to take offensive as well as defensive action against Tipu if need be.

But as 1788 dawned, Cornwallis's anxieties began to subside. 'Our alarm from Tipu's preparations has ceased', he told Lord Sydney on January 7th, and from then right up to the moment of collision, his unvarying theme was—*Tipu would like to attack us, he will seize any opportunity to attack us, but he is not preparing to attack us just now.*

This bout of confidence now led the Governor-General into an uncharacteristic move which was not only certain to irritate Tipu, but to compromise his own integrity.

¹ E.g. Kirkpatrick *Supp.* I: 'Of the remaining unbelievers let five thousand be suspended to trees'; VII: 'Let such of the males among them as are past twenty years of age be hung on trees' etc.

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Basalat Jung had died in 1782, and by the terms of the 1768 Treaty with Nizam Ali, his fief of Guntur in the Circars was due to revert to the English. The matter had been left in suspense ever since, but by June 1788 Cornwallis decided that the claim ought to be made good. Unfortunately, this reactivation of the 1768 Treaty brought into the spotlight other clauses in it, including an undertaking to provide the Nizam with troops. Cornwallis rightly felt that (as in the case of Nana Fadnavis's three battalions), to do so now would be to violate the Treaties of Madras with Haidar and of Mangalore with Tipu. So faced with contradictory obligations, he resorted to writing the Nizam a letter (July 1st, 1789) which was not in itself a treaty, yet would have the binding force of one. It confirmed that a military detachment would be furnished, but listed the country powers against whom it must not be employed. They included every important State in the Deccan and South India *except Mysore*. It is impossible to regard this as anything but a faintly disguised offensive alliance with the Nizam against Tipu Sultan, in contravention of the India Act of 1784. As Cornwallis expected, it did not provoke Tipu to instant war, but it certainly hardened his attitude in the crisis which followed over Travancore.

Tipu, and Haidar Ali before him, had always had it in mind to round off their southern dominions by getting control of this rising State, if not actually absorbing it. We have seen Haidar failing to do so in 1763, and Travancore still lay outside his grasp when in 1773 he formally annexed the Zamorin of Calicut's dominions and strengthened his suzerainty over Cochin, which separates Calicut from Travancore. But through Cochin's small territory ran part of the historic Travancore Lines, constructed by the Flemish soldier of fortune, Eustache de Lannoy, between 1761 and 1766. They had been originally designed to keep the Zamorin of Calicut out of Travancore, but latterly were regarded as serving the same valuable function vis-à-vis Haidar and Tipu! About forty miles in length, the Lines started on the little west coast island of Vypin and then ran eastwards into the heart of the Annamalai Hills. They consisted of a rampart with a sixteen-foot ditch and a strong bamboo hedge in front of it, and though the opinions of interested parties on their effectiveness varied, they gave meaning to the otherwise ill-defined northern defences of Travancore (End-map).

So much for the Lines themselves, but the approach to them

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from Tipu's side was complicated by the fact that the Dutch still retained their hold on the forts of Cranganur and Ayicottah, both sited on the strait dividing Vypin from the mainland, and well in advance of the Lines. As Tipu's threat to southern Malabar grew in mid-1789, the Dharma Raja¹ of Travancore made an offer to the Dutch Commander, Van Angelbeek, to buy these useful outposts. The Dutch, who were very short of money, had already been thinking about a sale, and the deal was clinched at a price of 300,000 Surat silver rupees, to be paid in instalments. Tipu was enraged. He contended that the Dutch only had Cranganur and Ayicotta on lease from his feudatory the Raja of Cochin, though he had already somewhat undermined that argument by putting in a bid himself. The Dutch contention of course was that they captured both places direct from the Portuguese in 1662 and, as Van Angelbeek wrote to the Governor of Madras on January 9th, 1790, they had never paid 'a single cash' in rent or tribute for them to 'the Zamorin, or (Tipu's) Aumildars at Calicut or to the King of Cochin or to any other person'. The Dutch also made the useful point that if Tipu had been seriously worried over the Lines he would surely have worked a reference to them into the Treaty of Mangalore.²

Whatever the facts, in the month of September 1789, from his camp near Coimbatore, Tipu Sultan commenced his march towards Travancore at the head of 20,000 regular infantry, 5,000 horse and 10,000 auxiliaries (later estimates were that he had between 10,000 and 15,000 men with him when he approached the Lines).

Now Tipu was not alone in condemning this transaction between Travancore and the Dutch. The English too thought that he was being unnecessarily provoked. The previous year the then Governor of Madras, General Sir Archibald Campbell,³ while assuring the nervous Dharma Raja that the English would fulfil their treaty obligations to him, emphasised that they would not concur in any plan which brought Cranganur and Ayicotta into

¹ The title by which Martanda Varma's successor, Rama Varma, was generally known.

² *Correspondence between the Governments of Bengal and Madras Relating to the Attack of Tippoo Sultan on the Lines of Travancore*. Ordered to be printed, Feb. 18th, 1791. See the Indian Office Records collection of Early Parliamentary Papers, No. 26.

³ Dundas's old friend had duly found his slot! Arrived Madras April 1786.

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Travancore's defensive zone. In January 1789 Sir Archibald went home, and John Hollond (Senior Member of Council) took over temporarily. This was an unfortunate throwback to the old type of Madras Governor, timid, ineffective and certainly dishonest.¹ Hollond not only expressed strong disapproval of the purchase of the two posts, but was prepared to co-operate with Tipu over forcing Travancore to return a number of refugee rulers from Malabar, some of whom had been in exile for over twenty years.

As for Cornwallis, he had developed what might be called a 'phoney war' mentality. He professed to have observed that Tipu's activities were purely seasonal. To Nathaniel Smith he wrote on November 9th, 1789:

The reports of Tipu's hostile intentions, to which I never gave much credit, begin now to subside as they generally do at about this time of the year . . .

And to Lieutenant-General Sir William Fawcett the same day:

Tipu has as usual, or at least as he has done in the two former years, assembled troops near the frontier and many reports have been spread of his hostile intentions, but I believe with as little foundation as heretofore, and indeed unless he could have the assistance of the French, of which he has now no prospect, it must be the height of madness for him to break with us.

And to Henry Dundas at the Board of Control, as late as December 5th:

Tippoo has moved from Coimbatore to Palacatcherry [Palghaut] —I should imagine he is going to make nearly the same war as last year. The Rajah of Travancore and our Resident there are thoroughly alarmed and though he is marching directly from the Travancore country they seem to be convinced that he means to attack it after he has taken Tellacherry which, bad as that place is, if the interior line is in any forwardness would be more than a breakfast for him.

I cannot for my part believe that Tippoo has any intention of breaking with us, but if he should resolve to do it he would be

¹ 'His government was marked by an accumulation of scandals beside which the misdeeds of his predecessors sink into nothingness'—Dodwell, *The Nabobs of Madras* (London, Williams and Norgate, 1926), p. 29.

THE COMING OF CORNWALLIS

very unwise if he did not begin, as his father did, by over-running the Carnatic and ruining our resources. . . .

The Rajah of Travancore is much to blame for concluding the purchase of Cranganur and Jacottah without the acquiescence of H.M.'s Government.

Yet, at a deeper level of his mind, Cornwallis undoubtedly believed that sooner or later the clash must come and, believing it, may have hoped it too. Not because he had the slightest desire for 'military laurels in Hindostan' as he told the Duke of York, or gratuitously to run the risk of being 'beat by some nabob', but because he shared the feeling that everyone who lived in Britain between September 1939 and May 1940 will recognise—if the enemy is going to attack let him do so and get it over! In that sense Cornwallis may be said to have positively welcomed the dramatic episode which took place on the Lines of Travancore twenty-four days after his letter to Dundas.

The Travancore Lines—and Beyond

THE attentive reader will have noted that whereas on page 123 Tipu is described as moving towards Travancore, on page 124 Cornwallis declares that he is moving 'directly from it'. The explanation is that though his march from Coimbatore to Palghaut certainly carried him clear of the main mass of Travancore territory, Palghaut was fulfilling one of its many roles by providing the only possible gateway to Cochin and an assault on the Travancore Lines. Tipu, in the event, never showed a sign of taking the long stride north-west to capture Tellicherry, where he had kept the English intermittently blockaded¹ since the peace of Mangalore.

By the second week in December the Mysorean forces were concentrated in front of the Lines, and when on the 15th Tipu sent a wakil with an ultimatum to the Dharma Raja, he was clearly in a position to back his demands with menaces. The former were predictable—the withdrawal of Travancore troops from the Cranganur salient; the demolition of the section of the Lines on Cochin soil; and the return of the Malabar refugees. Though the Raja's reply was conciliatory, almost submissive, it included a reasoned rebuttal of Tipu's claims and a request for time to consult his (the Raja's) English allies. Hollond now suggested the appointment of Commissioners to adjust the points in dispute, but even before this proposal reached him, Tipu had completed his dispositions for attacking the Lines.

As to what followed, there are basically only two accounts to be considered: one synthesised, first by Roderick Mackenzie² and much later by Wilks, from the reports of the Raja himself, of George Powney, English Resident at his Court, and of various officials and observers; the other which was put forward by Tipu.

¹ When his officers had urged him to attack it the previous year, Tipu replied: 'Let me hear no such advice. The English are like a bee-hive. which if we disturb, we may be surrounded on all sides and suffer not a little from their stings' (*An Account of Tippoo Sultan*, by Captain Alexander Dirom, dated Dec. 14th, 1789. P.R.O. 30/11/92-102).

² Lieut. Roderick Mackenzie, *A Sketch of the War with Tipu Sultan* (Calcutta, printed for the author, 1793-4).

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According to the former, the Mysoreans, under Tipu's personal command, made a carefully planned assault in force, which fell into confusion and nearly into disaster. Tipu, on the other hand, in a letter to the Government of Madras dated January 1st, 1790, but delivered a fortnight later,¹ chose to represent the affair as a frontier skirmish. According to him, some of his troops who were routing out fugitives were fired on by the garrison, and in retaliation attacked the eastern part of the Lines; he himself was not present, and when he heard of the encounter, withdrew his forces at once. This version is accepted by Mohibbul Hasan, though the main corroboration which he quotes is that of the Governor of Madras in a letter to Kennaway at Hyderabad, of which we shall hear more.

Against this, it seems improbable that all the contemporary reports on which the Travancore/English narrative was based could have first been fabricated and then sustained virtually without challenge through the years that followed. And it can surely be argued that Tipu had more interest in providing a rough-and-ready cover story for his failure than had the other side in falsifying the details of their success. There is the further point that if Tipu's men were merely chasing a few refugees through the bush, what was he himself doing in front of the Travancore Lines with at least 15,000 troops?

The fair conclusion is that Tipu, while not committing himself to an all-out invasion at this stage, did in fact hope that the Lines would be 'rushed' before there could be any question of the English coming to the rescue in force. He would then have been able to dictate terms to Travancore, Mysorean control of India's south-west coastline would be virtually complete, and the English flank in the Carnatic would be turned at last.

The assault plan as described by Wilks had considerable virtues, though it called for careful execution. At daybreak on December 29th two infantry brigades, each about 1,500 strong, together with cavalry and the spearmen of the royal guard (thus suggesting Tipu's own presence), were to demonstrate² in front of one of the

¹ *Madras Political Proceedings*, Feb. 10th, 1790.

² According to one anonymous version (not very accurate in other respects), they did more than demonstrate—they opened fire against the walls and made a practicable breach, but could not reach it because of the density of the bamboo hedge. (*Concise Account of Tipu Sultan's Attack on the Northern Frontier of Travancore*, Home Mi-c. 248, IOR, ff. 339-49.) Wilks's narrative is in Vol. III, pp. 46-9.

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principal gates through the Lines. But overnight he and his main force of infantry, with 500 pioneers, were to march some nine miles (Mackenzie says twelve) to a place called Charaputamallai high in the hills near the eastern termination of the Lines, surprise the garrison there and then move westwards along the ramparts to join up with and admit the rest of this army.

It took Tipu from 10 o'clock at night until nine in the morning to carry out the first stage of his programme, having some very rough country to navigate. His attack took the defenders—a few Nairs—completely by surprise, and at first they fled before him, but resistance increased at every tower along the wall. Finally a stand was made in a fortified enclosure where grape shot from a small gun brought the assault troops to a halt. Tipu then decided to pass these tired men to the rear and bring up fresh battalions—a tricky enough manoeuvre on such a narrow front. It was more or less under way when a small party of Travancoreans opened a flanking fire from the bamboo thickets below the walls. The officer commanding the corps attacked was killed, and the rest rushed towards the rear.

The sequel can be imagined. Tipu had tried to provide a broader approach by throwing part of the rampart down into the ditch, but the exhausted pioneers had not made much headway with this. Tipu himself was flung to the ground and was only saved by his bodyguard raising him on their shoulders and at the third attempt hoisting him on to the counterscarp of the ditch.¹ His palanquin was captured with his personal belongings in it. Kirmani (who follows the general line in a shorter and vaguer account²) mentions that contrary to rumour the trophies did *not* include Tipu's turban, which at the time was 'on his fortunate head'—a turban found in the palanquin was a footman's, seized upon by the benighted infidels by mistake. Punganuri also refers to the capture of the palanquin.

It needs to be added that Mohibbul Hasan is particularly dis-

¹ It was also freely reported that he was wounded, and Colonel Musgrave, commanding troops in the Carnatic, told Cornwallis that after widespread enquiries he considered this proved. Wilks says that Tipu's 'contusions' caused him occasional lameness for the rest of his life. Yet Malet wrote to the Governor of Bombay on April 11th that an informant had seen Tipu in perfect health at the beginning of February and that he had *not* been wounded.

² *Tipu Sultan*, pp. 157-60. He bemusedly describes the affair of the Lines as an attack on Cochin.

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missive of this part of the story—mainly on the ground that the ever-active Tipu took a poor view of palanquins and preferred to operate on horseback. Looking closer, if Tipu was in fact attempting a decisive assault upon the Lines, it seems natural that a palanquin containing his bed, seals etc. should have accompanied him; against this, the Raja of Travancore never claimed to have captured either his enemy's palanquin or the objects supposed to be in it, and Powney and Mackenzie both specifically mention that Tipu had his *horse* shot under him. With the final observation that a horse seems an even less suitable conveyance than a palanquin for fighting one's way along a fortified rampart, we must leave this scene, having failed (as in other contexts) totally to disprove Tipu's veracity, while casting substantial doubts upon it!

Inevitably, the Mysorean forces now withdrew, and began to regroup for a return match. Having come to regard the Lines as a place of strength, Tipu decided, among other things, to call forward a siege train, and this took time. Meanwhile he wrote round to all his Governors and Killedars, warning them to be on the alert and ready for war.¹

On the far side of India, the reaction was sharp, but by no means united. Cornwallis, as I have said, greeted the news with a sense of release from the inhibitions of the past. To him the attack on Travancore meant that England was from that moment at war with Tipu Sultan, and British India must be put on a war footing. On the political front, Malet at Poona and Kennaway at Hyderabad must do their utmost to bring the Marathas and the Nizam into a triple alliance against Mysore; on the military, the assembly and equipment of the strongest possible armies must be pressed forward.

Neither objective was achieved in a hurry. On February 2nd, within six days of receiving the Governor-General's instructions, Malet had a preliminary interview with one of Nana's assistants. His reception was hopeful, and on the 10th the young Peshwa himself, with all his principal officers, paid a visit of ceremony to the Resident. But a very long haggle followed, in which Tipu's vakils, who still haunted Poona, did their best to play a disruptive role. Kennaway had an equally laborious task at Hyderabad, where the Nizam seemed less concerned with beating Tipu than

¹ Kirkpatrick *Supp.* XXXIII, *et seq.*

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with asserting his independence of the Marathas and securing guarantees against them. Not a promising start to an alliance! But at last the draft for a tripartite offensive and defensive treaty was hammered out, and though in the end the Nizam insisted on signing a separate document, the terms in each case were identical.

It was agreed that all three powers would wage war against Tipu independently, but that on demand the Peshwa and the Nizam would each send 10,000 horse to operate with the English, who in exchange would supply them with detachments of two battalion strength; there was to be equal division of conquests apart from any towns or fortresses captured by the English before their allies took the field; certain named poligars and zemindars were to revert to their Maratha or Hyderabad overlordship—a rash undertaking, since some of the territories mentioned had been acquired by Haidar as far back as 1762.

The treaties were not finally ratified until the month of June, by which time the English forces were already in motion.

The military aspect was not without vexation to Cornwallis, especially in the early stages. He quickly discovered that Hollond was an appeaser, and that he used appeasement as an excuse for inaction. He quite cheerfully accepted Tipu's version of the Travancore Lines affair, and passed on to Kennaway without comment an extract from the letter of January 1st which contained it. Worse still, he ignored the Governor-General's repeated direction that any attack by Mysore on an ally of England was to be treated as a declaration of war, and he infuriated Cornwallis by insisting that there had been a 'considerable saving' by his failure to collect transport for the army when he was ordered to do so.

Cornwallis in fact had decided to come down to Madras and take charge himself when fortunately Hollond's replacement arrived and he and his brother Edward (who succeeded him for a few days) vanished from the Indian scene. Cornwallis never forgave what he called the 'criminal disobedience' of these men, and did his best to get them prosecuted for corruption.

The new Governor of Madras took office on February 20th, 1790. He was Major-General William Medows, an officer who had made his debut in India as commander of the land forces sent with Commodore Johnstone's convoy in 1782. He had been earmarked to succeed Sir Eyre Coote as Commander-in-Chief, but not liking the disorder he found at Madras, decided to go back to

THE TRAVANCORE LINES—AND BEYOND

England as soon as possible. Meanwhile, by what Wilks justly calls 'a singular determination', he remained with the fleet as a volunteer under Sir Edward Hughes.

Evidently this free-and-easy behaviour—not rare among King's officers in the East—did not count against Medows, since it was on the eager persuasion of Dundas that he became Governor of Bombay in September 1788, with the promise of succession to Madras. Cornwallis also looked on him as the next Governor-General, and this appeared to be clinched by a resolution (April 28th, 1790) of the Court of Governors of the H.E.I.C. appointing Major-General Medows as 'Governor-General of Bengal, upon the death, removal or resignation of Earl Cornwallis'. But it was not to be.

When Medows moved to Madras he was followed at Bombay by Major-General Richard Abercrombie, a veteran of Yorktown. Thus the three great Indian Governorships¹ were now held by soldiers, all of whom were destined to lead armies against Tipu Sultan. It was probably the best available answer to the challenge of the times.

With the Hollonds out of the way, Cornwallis's anxieties over Madras died down for the moment, and all three Presidencies girded themselves for war.

It might be expected that the first preoccupation would be the security of Travancore, where a renewed attack was almost certain. But half-measures still prevailed in that quarter. As far back as 1788, the then Governor of Madras, Sir Archibald Campbell, had sent two battalions of troops to stiffen the determination of our ally the Raja, but they had been strictly briefed not to operate in any disputed territory. They played no part in the affair of the Lines, and thereafter seem to have remained stationary (and demoralised) in the Island of Vypin. No reinforcements reached them until April 25th, when Colonel Hartley arrived from Bombay at the head of three battalions (one European).²

By then, the fate of Travancore's defences had been settled. It

¹ At this period, and much later, the Governor-General 'doubled' as Governor of Bengal, the post from which his own high office had evolved.

² An excellent report by Hartley on his operations is in N. B. Ray (ed.) *The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan* (Bombay, Government Central Press, 1937), being Vol. III of the *Poona Residency Correspondence*. See pp. 116–20 for Hartley's report.

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must have been towards the end of February that Tipu's heavy guns were unlimbered in front of the Lines, because on March 1st the Travancoreans, suspecting that some thick bamboo jungle was providing cover for a battery, sallied out to burn it. Tipu's men drove them back with many casualties, and a few days later the bombardment of the Lines began. As had happened at Mangalore, heavy stones—and even 'billets of wood'—as well as orthodox round shot were flung at the defenders, and much moral and material damage was done.

On April 9th there was another attempt at a sortie, only to meet the same fate as the first. Three days later Tipu launched his main assault. A preliminary bombardment soon opened a wide breach in what were, in fact, fairly flimsy defences, and a column about 6,000 strong poured through. To defend his territory, the Dharma Raja is said to have raised an army of 100,000 men, including some mercenaries from Madras, but even if this figure is accepted, the proportion of trained soldiers in such a host must obviously have been minute. In any case the resistance was feeble; northern Travancore fell to the enemy and dreadful havoc was inflicted, particularly on the Christian community.

The only area near the Lines which was left untouched was the Island of Vypin, where Tipu was quite happy to keep the small English force immobilised. His nearest approach to them was when he sent Lally's detachment to threaten Cranganur. Still without instructions, and feeling themselves too weak for effective action, even with the reinforcements from Bombay, the English made no attempt to advance to the defence of this much-disputed place. On May 7th they covered the withdrawal of the Travancorean garrison, and the next morning Tipu's men marched in.

It now appeared that the whole of Travancore might well be over-run. The Raja had slipped away to the far south with his remaining forces,¹ and organised resistance had virtually ceased. It is true that the monsoon was about to break, but Tipu was a general who never took much notice of the weather. More to the point were the reports now coming in that the conclusion of the triple alliance against Mysore was imminent. By the third week in May Tipu had decided where the first priority lay—the defence of his kingdom. After a ceremonial demolition of the famous Lines, in which he himself is supposed to have wielded the

¹ Some 10,000 of them huddled into Vypin, under English protection.

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inaugural pick, he collected his armies and marched them away towards the Ghats.

Few of the Travancoreans who watched them go can have guessed that Tipu Sultan of Mysore would never again be seen in their country—nor in Cochin, nor Calicut, nor Cannanore. As it turned out, this haphazard and destructive episode, instead of consolidating his power in the south-west, marked the end of it. The few battles and sieges still to come only underlined the fact. The territory we now call Kerala had seen many conquerors or would-be conquerors before Haidar's first invasion, but in spite of his son's reformist aims, to which we have paid due tribute, it must be said that neither the English nor the Dutch, nor even the ruthless Portuguese, showed themselves more alien to or disruptive of the entire region's political and social fabric than the two dictators from Mysore. Given time, they might have remade it in their own image; as it was, they came and conquered and killed and converted—and then disappeared for ever.

11

The Army of the South

THE strategic problem facing the English in May 1790 was precisely the same as in the preceding campaigns having the invasion of Mysore for their aim—how to gain a footing above the Ghats in the face of a powerful and mobile army operating on interior lines. And the solution chosen was identical too—a main attack from the south via the Gajalhatti Pass, with diversionary thrusts elsewhere. Cornwallis calls it ‘Colonel Musgrave’s plan’, but readers of Chapter 5 will recognise it at once as Colonel Fullarton’s—inherited from Ross Lang and Humberstone. The first steps were to take possession of Coimbatore and (of course!) Palghaut. Meanwhile Abercrombie’s Bombay Army was to clear Malabar of Tipu’s troops and eventually to make a junction with Medows. The third prong was a ‘Central Army’ under Colonel Kelly, briefed to occupy the Baramahal region so as to discourage any Mysorean descent upon the Carnatic (End-map).

Cornwallis was uneasy about the whole project. Not only did it involve a wide dispersal of forces, but it was starting so late in the season that any army aimed at Palghaut would meet the full force of the south-west monsoon. This might bring the entire expedition to a standstill and leave Tipu free to spread havoc east and south outside the monsoon zone.

However, for the time being all went reasonably well. On May 24th Major-General Medows took over command of what was usually called the Grand Army, and at the next day’s review he was pleased with what he saw. The 15,000 men assembled near Trichinopoly were drawn entirely from the Company’s Madras Army and from the King’s regiments operating with it. It can be estimated that the total strength of the English forces throughout India at this time was about 72,000 men, of whom just over 8,000 were King’s troops. The make-up of the Madras Army is typical of the whole:

Native Cavalry (5 Regiments) 2,460 men with 50 European Officers.

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Native Infantry (30 Regiments) 19,200 men with 340 European Officers.

European Infantry (2 Battalions) 2,464 men with 128 European Officers.

Artillery 740 men with 62 European Officers.

Totals: 21,660 Native Troops

3,204 European Troops

602 European Officers¹

Grand Total: 25,466.

Not long before the Third Mysore War, the two European battalions were divided into four, though at what strength is not clear. In any case, all the above are paper figures, taking no account of under-recruitment and a heavy sick-list. The 15,000 men under Medows's command comprised twelve battalions of Sepoys and one of Madras European Infantry, four regiments of Native Cavalry and six Artillery companies, in addition to three regiments of H.M. Foot (the 71st, 72nd, and 74th) and the 19th Light Dragoons under their soon-to-be-famous commander, Lieutenant-Colonel John Floyd; it is obvious that at least half the Madras Army's total effectives had been brought forward to Trichinopoly. What kind of a force was it? Cornwallis had come out to India with very little idea of the quality of the men whose Commander-in-Chief he was destined to be. But his practised eye soon got their measure, and his admiration of the 'Sepoys or native black troops' shine through his letters and memoranda. Writing to the Duke of York as early as November 10th, 1786, he describes them as

... fine men, and would not in size disgrace the Prussian ranks.

I have heard undeniable proofs of their courage and patience in bearing hunger and fatigue, but from the little I have hitherto seen of them I have no favourable idea of their discipline.

A year passes, and on December 10th, 1787, he can give H.R.H. an even better report:

The appearance of the native troops gave me the greatest satisfaction; some of the battalions were perfectly well trained and there was a spirit of emulation amongst the officers and an attention in the men, which leaves me but little doubt that they

¹ This figure includes Staff as well as regimental officers. My table as a whole is taken from *British India Analysed*, p. 790.

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will soon be brought to a high state of discipline. I have abolished their dancing about in various forms to jig-tunes and have substituted marching to time and such evolutions as would be best to prepare them for the great manoeuvres, of which they did not entertain the most distant idea . . .

Sepoy morale, in fact was high, and was no doubt enhanced by the slashing uniform shown in Plate 6 and described by Innes Munro:

. . . a red light infantry jacket, a white waistcoat, and a blue turban placed in a soldier-like manner upon the head, edged round with tape of the same colour as the facings, and having a tassel at the lower corner.

The sepoy has a long blue sash lightly girded round his loins, the end of which, passing between his legs, is fastened behind. He wears a pair of white drawers, tightly fitted, which only come half way down his thigh, and being coloured at the lower end with a blue dye, appear as though scalloped all round; a pair of sandals on his feet, white cross belts, a firelock and bayonet complete the sepoy's dress.¹

Such were the men who had fought the Company's battles since the days of Stringer Lawrence.² They were led by officers who at least understood them thoroughly, though they were unlikely to have the fire of military genius in their bellies. The system hardly encouraged that. Because there were virtually no regular appointments in the Company's service above the rank of colonel, the native battalions were often commanded by middle-aged majors or even captains, with little hope of higher rank to look forward to, but very well placed financially where they were.

This was indeed one of the problems which finally defeated Cornwallis when he tried to carry out the brief he had been given before he left England to integrate the King's and the Company's forces. Just as difficult as absorbing such veteran captains into an integrated regiment, he told the Secretary for War, Sir George

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

² The Madras Government had been employing Sepoys since 1746 (the French recruited them even earlier). The first regular battalions dated from 1759 and there were sixteen by 1767. Colonel Joseph Smith saw to it that they were carefully brigaded and placed under picked officers and in return he received their implicit confidence. See W. J. Wilson, *History of the Madras Army* (Madras 1882), Vol. I, Chapter I *et seq.*

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Yonge (March 7th, 1788), would be to persuade a lieutenant-colonel or an old major, who might expect in a few years to be a colonel with 'seven or eight thousand pounds a year', to take his place at the bottom of the long list of lieutenant-colonels in the King's service 'where, without interest or connections, he could not expect to get a regiment in twenty years'.

On the march and in camp, the Company's troops hardly presented the soldierly appearance which Cornwallis admired on the parade ground. The tradition of camp followers *en masse* in Indian armies has already been noticed and this conspired with long service, good pay and an exacting climate to induce an obsession with creature comforts among the Company's officers. No captain,¹ by Innes Munro's account, could think of setting forth without the services of a *dubash* (head servant), a cook, a boy, a horse-keeper, a grass-cutter, four baggage bullocks and two drivers (or twelve to fifteen extra coolies if bullocks were short), four coolies for conveying his bed etc., a palanquin and nine bearers,² and sometimes a *dulcinea* and her train . . .

Camp pitched, this labour force hastened to deploy the captain's minimal needs:

A good large bed, mattress, pillows etc., a few camp stools or chairs, a folding table, a pair of shades for his candles; six or seven trunks with table equipage; his stock of linens (at least 24 suits); some dozens of wine, brandy and gin; tea, sugar and biscuits; an hamper of live poultry and his milch goat. A private's tent for his servants and the over-plus of his luggage is also requisite.

Munro is probably piling it on a bit, and of course under campaign conditions most of this fantastic clutter was gradually shed as the camp followers deserted and the baggage bullocks died. Nevertheless, it was in some such fashion that the old army of John Company went to the wars.

With one Madras battalion on parade at Trichinopoly and

¹ In 1781, records Wilson (Vol. II, p. 116), the number of 'private followers' for whom rice rations could be drawn by a captain was twenty. General officers were entitled rations for fifty, Field Officers for forty and Subalterns for twelve followers.

² 'It might be thought improper, on such occasions as taking the field, to allow the captain a palanquin, but I have known many of them to be permitted to enjoy this luxury at very improper seasons.'—Innes Munro, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

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another assigned to the Central Army, the Company's European regiments require a word. Few in number—an all-India return for 1788-9 shows six battalions in Bengal and two in Bombay, in addition to those at Madras—these units offered neither prospects for their officers nor a self-respecting life for their rank-and-file. Even the generous Cornwallis called them 'such miserable wretches that I am ashamed to acknowledge them for countrymen'.

Part of the trouble lay in the Company's system—or lack of it—for gathering recruits in Britain. Up till 1787 it had been forbidden to do this openly, hence its resort to crimping, kidnapping and the rounding up of gaol-birds. But it was slow to mend its ways; Dundas, writing to Cornwallis in March 1788, remarks that he has urged the Directors again and again to 'take the benefit of Carisbrooke Castle as a depot for their recruits' and to keep enlistment going all the year round instead of doing it in a 'slovenly and disgraceful manner' just before the ships sailed.

In nearly every line of battle we see the 'miserable wretches' relegated to the reserves; let it be recorded, then, that under such a leader as Major Francis Gowdie, they stood fire and fought well, and at the storming of Nandidrug in October 1791 the 'valour and discipline' of the 4th Madras Europeans extorted the praise of Lord Cornwallis.¹

If, as Cornwallis thought, Medows's army was the finest so far put into the field by the English in India, it was facing the best equipped and best disciplined troops maintained by any Indian State. Tipu had inherited a system of compulsory service which had been completely purged of its old feudal element—the armed forces answered to the ruler direct, and he was the sole source of promotions and of punishments. If anything, this personal control was intensified by Tipu, since with characteristic wariness he kept the troops as much as possible under his eye—most of them were actually cantoned in and around Seringapatam—and never left an officer in command of the same unit for any length of time. For the same prudential reason, the soldiers' families were compelled to live in Seringapatam, Bangalore or Bednur.

Tipu's forces greatly outnumbered any which the English alone could bring against them. Purnaiya told Wilks that at Haidar's

¹ Wilson (Vol. II, p. 211) points out that in 1841 the battle honour 'Nundy Droog' was among those awarded to what had become The Royal Madras Fusiliers.

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death the ration strength of the Mysore army was 88,000, while Alexander Read's estimate¹ on the eve of the Third Anglo-Mysore War was 3,000 regular and 5,000 irregular cavalry, 48,000 regular and about 65,000 irregular infantry and 10,000 *asad ilahis* (P.O.W. battalions). His figures for both kinds of cavalry seem too low, however.

The regular forces were originally organised into *cushoons*, *risalas* and *juqs*, roughly equivalent to brigades, battalions and companies, and commanded by *Sipahdars*, *Risaldars*, and *Jugdars* respectively. The Sipahdar was under the obligation to consult his Risaldars over any serious problem and if necessary to take their opinions in writing. There was also the curious institution of the *Saryasaqchi*, an officer of subaltern rank but with wide powers of inspection and report. One of his duties was to keep the higher command (and even Tipu himself) informed about the discipline and morale of the *risala* to which he was attached. The Mysorean equivalent of a Political Commissar perhaps? It is significant too that, judging by some of the letters printed by Kirkpatrick, Tipu encouraged certain Sipahdars to write to him over the heads of their commanding generals, even on matters of current strategy.

Before 1790, Tipu had put through one of his reorganizations. Brigades were now called *cutcheries*; there were four each for cavalry and infantry, the former being divided into five *mokums* or regiments and the latter into six *cushoons*, that term having been now downgraded. The command of the cutcheries was given to a *Bakshi*, hitherto a mere Paymaster, and under him were *Mokumdars* (cavalry) and *Sipahdars* (infantry).

Every chronicler pays tribute to the smart appearance and excellent equipment of the Mysorean armies, as well as to their remarkable steadiness under fire. The infantry (Plate 7) wore tunics of the famous 'tiger' pattern, with or without short trousers. They were armed with muskets and each cushoon had its corps artillery of from one to five guns. In this department Haidar and Tipu had a consistent advantage over the English: their field pieces, mostly cast in Mysore under French supervision, were of heavier bore and longer range than anything issued to the Company's forces, and their mortars, though sometimes fanciful in form (Plate 12a), did great damage.

¹ Ms. 46, I.O.L., ff. 134-5.

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Operating in support were the rocketeers and other auxiliaries. The *rocket* was a distinctively Indian arm of some antiquity. It was in the nature of an ordinary firework, but with a cylinder of iron, and sometimes with an explosive charge or a sword blade fitted at the forward end. According to de la Tour, the Mysorean rockets had a carry of up to 1,000 yards and Wilks mentions the skill of their operators in giving them 'an elevation proportioned to the varying dimensions of the cylinder and the distance of the object to be struck'. Eye-witnesses differed vastly as to their effectiveness, the point being that while it was easy to see the individual rocket coming and to avoid it, a concentrated discharge could cause a lot of damage and dismay, especially among cavalry. It was a rocket which contributed to Baillie's defeat by setting fire to one of his ammunition tumbrils.¹

Of all Tipu's troops, the most versatile were the irregular cavalry, or *silhadars*. In contrast to the 'stable horse' (*askars*, these found their own arms and mounts, like the old yeomanry of England, and their pay and allowances were adjusted accordingly. They and the irregular infantry were responsible for much of the devastation wrought by Tipu's armies in the Carnatic and Malabar. Many were hunters by profession, but during his 1800-1 tour Dr. Buchanan² found groups of them reluctantly settling down to farming in the Savandurga area. He describes them as excellent marksmen with matchlocks, accustomed to pursuing tigers and deer in the woods and indefatigable in running down their prey, 'which in time of war was the life and property of every helpless creature that came their way'.

The European auxiliaries in the service of Mysore never seem to have amounted to more than a few hundreds, but we have seen

¹ The British Army took over the idea at a later date, but though the 'Congreve rockets' of the nineteenth century caused an initial sensation, they were found to be more of a danger to their operators than to the enemy, and gradually become obsolete. The weapon has, of course, been revived in our own day.

A particularly fearful use for rockets, by the way, is mentioned by Grant Duff in his *History of the Mahrattas* (Vol. III, p. 190). He tells how a certain 'Narain Rao Buckshee' was 'barbarously destroyed by being tied round with rockets which, being fired, carried him along, mangling his body fearfully'.

² For Dr. H. F. Buchanan's *Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, see p. 363. His Savandurga visit is in Vol. I, p. 123.

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how Lally's men made up for their scanty numbers by their skill and dash in a dozen close-run fights.

Early on the morning following General Medows's review (i.e. on May 26th), the Grand Army prepared to move off. Innes Munro has set just a scene for us:

The first ruffle (he says) is no sooner made by the senior corps in camp than there is a general stir throughout the whole army. The lascars knock down the tent pins; the dubash prepares breakfast for his master; the cook boils water for tea; the coolies pack up their loads; the soldiers are warming up some curry and rice and receiving their morning drams; the carriage bullocks are brought from the rear; down fall the tents like a forest yielding to the stroke of the wood-cutter . . .

By this time too swarms of the black race have kindled blazing fires in every corner of the camp; and such as had agreed the night before to keep company upon the line of march are now heard bellowing aloud each other's names in the most discordant sounds. Nothing can be conceived more offensive to the ear than this noise . . .¹

Medows's troops took the road with five days' provisions on their own backs and forty more on the bullocks'.² They advanced slowly, and though only six days were actually spent marching, it was June 11th before they occupied Karur, about fifty miles from Trichinopoly, and just inside Tipu's borders. Already there was much sickness, and when they got into motion again on July 3rd, they left no fewer than 1,200 men behind in an improvised hospital.

Coimbatore was now the objective, but to get there Medows described a vast arc southwards via Daraporam; this could only be justified by the supposition that Tipu had menacing forces on the English left flank, which he had not. However, on July 21st

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

² The military movements in the remainder of this chapter are mainly collated from Wilks (Vol. III, p. 72 *et seq.*), Mackenzie (Vol. I, p. 74 *et seq.*), Rennell (see p. 145, n. 2) and Sir John Fortescue, *History of the British Army* (London, John Murray, 1899 *et seq.*, Vol. III, pp. 552-61). They can easily be followed in my End map.

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Coimbatore was occupied without resistance, and welcome stores of grain were unearthed.

A hostile critic of all this was Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Deare, an artillery man serving under Medows. He came from Bengal and was quite sure he knew best about everything, including the route from Trichinopoly to Coimbatore. Convinced that Tipu was immobilised at the latter through disease among his draught cattle, he had repeatedly urged a swift advance via Erode, so as to cut him off from the Ghats. Medows would not listen, and Deare's criticism of him—personal and otherwise (see p. 199) was bitter in the extreme. Alas, the letter¹ in which he poured it all out, together with his confident dreams of rising fame and influence, is dated 'Camp at Satymangalam, September 8th, 1790'. Five days later he was dead.

With Coimbatore in his hands, Medows bestirred himself, and thrust out three mobile columns. Colonel James Stuart was to attack Palghaut, Colonel Oldham to march north-east to occupy Erode, a future supply link with the Carnatic, and Colonel Floyd to probe towards the Grand Army's eventual destination—Mysore by the Gajalhatti route.

The first column came quickly to grief. Coimbatore, being partially protected by the southern tip of the Ghats, receives only a scattering of the south-west monsoon, but before Stuart had gone twenty miles westwards, the peril predicted by Cornwallis fell upon him, full strength. Though he struggled along to within striking distance of Palghaut, torrential rain and swelling streams made a siege impracticable, and within a week of setting out he and his brigade were back in Coimbatore. One more week, (August 5th) and they were on their way south-east to capture Dindigul, 112 miles the way they went! They got there on the 16th. The fortifications were strong and the Killedar, Haidar Abbas, boldly defiant. Being short of ammunition for his heavy guns, Stuart decided to gamble on an assault without adequate artillery preparation. This was mounted on the 21st. It was repulsed, but fortunately Haidar Abbas, ignorant of the English dilemma and weakened by desertions, surrendered the next day.

¹ Home Misc. 251, I.O.R., f. 413. The recipient of the letter is not named. One sentence gives an all too familiar clue to Deare's venom—'It is,' he says, 'the settled system in this army that no Company's officer shall be employed where it is possible to avoid it.'

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Stuart's men then tramped the one hundred and twelve miles back to Coimbatore, and to complete our peripatetic tale of a tough and resilient little army,¹ they were sent off again, almost at once, to have a second go at Palghaut. The monsoon having now spent its fury they got there without trouble, and despite some further strengthening of the defences since Colonel Fullarton's day, the garrison capitulated promptly; their chief request was for protection against the Nairs, who had assembled in force and in a vengeful mood. With their help Stuart, having arrived before Palghaut 'with two days provisions and without a shilling in his military chest', was able to stock up very satisfactorily and to return to Coimbatore with a month's grain for the whole army.

Meanwhile, feathers were flying in the real cockpit, forty miles to the north. Colonel Oldham satisfactorily secured the line of advance to Erode, and Medows at once sent three of his own battalions forward to join him. But it was Floyd who made the first contact with the enemy. It had long been realised that Tipu, having remained on the watch at Coimbatore until July 3rd, had now withdrawn to the plateau, leaving behind only some 4,000 second-grade cavalry under Saiyid Saheb. This all-purpose officer was supposed to harass Medows's lines of communication, but instead, Floyd set out to surprise him near the Bhavani river, a tributary of the Cauvery flowing across the line of the English advance towards Gajalhatti. Floyd's move failed, but Saiyid Saheb chose to retreat behind the river and eventually up the Ghats and into the arms of his enraged master, who gave him a forceful dressing-down and later bestowed his command upon Qamar-ud-din. Floyd crossed the Bhavani unopposed and occupied the fort of Satyamangalam on the north bank, only thirteen miles from Gajalhatti.

And now at last Tipu took a hand. Since leaving Coimbatore he had been active in the Seringapatam area, gathering his forces for a major coup. On September 2nd he set off southwards at the head of a great army, 40,000 strong. Leaving his heavy artillery and baggage under Purnaiya's command at the top of Gajalhatti Pass (September 9th), he descended by the very route earmarked by the English for their advance into Mysore. Despite his numbers and a tortuous series of defiles to be threaded, Tipu moved swiftly, though not entirely unobserved. By the 11th and 12th

¹ They apparently received some reinforcement at this stage.

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Floyd was hearing unconfirmed stories from prisoners or deserters that the great Sultan was at hand, and before dawn on the 13th his patrols reconnoitring the ford of Poongar a few miles upstream from Satyamangalam suddenly found themselves in contact with large bodies of the enemy advancing from the north and west. It was a close, trappy country, criss-crossed with hedges of euphorbia and prickly pear—the worst possible terrain for cavalry; nevertheless, two troops of the 19th Dragoons managed to corner several hundred of Tipu's stable horse in one of the enclosures and wiped them out. This was the action in which Lieutenant-Colonel Deare was killed. Reinforcements came up, and a safe withdrawal was made to Floyd's camp on the south bank of the Bhavani, just opposite Satyamangalam.

Tipu was not far behind, and a severe and damaging cannonade followed. Colonel Oldham had come up from Erode, and on paper the English force was quite a strong one; in addition to six troops of Dragoons, Floyd now had sixteen troops of native cavalry, a battalion of H.M.'s 36th Foot and four battalions of Sepoys (one of them garrisoning Satyamangalam). But the number of effectives was not more than 3,000, and the danger of being trapped by the main Mysorean army caused an anxious council of war to be held that same night.

Floyd's own proposal was that the whole of the infantry should be thrown into Satyamangalam, while the cavalry made for Coimbatore and brought forward Medows's remaining forces to relieve them. But then up and spoke Captain Archibald Brown, commanding the 1st Carnatic Battalion of Native Infantry. Rather, he said, than lead his corps to be 'cut up like coolies' in a fort where there was not room to parade 200 files, and any one of whose walls could be levelled in an hour by a couple of twelve-pounders, he would request Colonel Floyd to let him remain on the ground where they stood, with as many volunteers as would join him, to sell their lives at the proper value!¹

This disposed of Satyamangalam, and it was finally agreed that horse and foot would retire on Coimbatore together. Several English guns had been disabled during the cannonade, but two of them were now brought in by the exertions of Brigade-Major Dallas—that same Thomas Dallas who once commanded the

¹ See *East India Military Calendar* (1824), Vol. II. Entry, *Lieutenant-General Archibald Brown*.

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Commissioners' escort at Mangalore. The Satyamangalam garrison was fetched back across the river in basket boats and at 8 a.m. the army marched.

What with heavy rain and the difficult country, Tipu was for once slow to get his own forces into motion and it was two o'clock before he came up with the English. The rear and flanks of the retreating column were severely punished and more guns had to be jettisoned. Finally Floyd's tired men were brought to bay near the village of Cheyur, about eighteen miles from their starting point. The native infantry, drawn up two deep, behaved with the greatest steadiness, and one wave after another of attackers was thrown back. The result was still in doubt when a troop of English cavalry, who had been foraging ahead, were seen returning down the Coimbatore road. For a moment the enemy believed that this was Medows's advance guard, the English prolonged their illusion by letting fly three piercing huzzahs, and it was just then that news was brought to Tipu that his kinsman and general, Burhan-ud-din, had been trapped in a river bed and killed.¹ The Mysoreans wavered, the English cavalry charged, and the day was won.

Medows, sure enough, was already on the march, and after some groping, his force and Floyd's came together at Valladi, twenty miles west of Cheyur. They then returned to Coimbatore, and with Stuart arriving from Palghaut a few days later, the whole army was reunited. The English were in a sense back at Square One—or Minus One, if one reckons their 500 casualties, their dead draught cattle and abandoned guns and equipment. On the other hand, they had escaped with honour from an exceedingly dangerous encounter with Tipu Sultan.

On September 29th they set out to look for him again. The story of the next few weeks, which need not be told in detail, is of fluent and elusive movements by Tipu—one of them took him far enough south-east to re-occupy Daraporam—and a clumsy pursuit by Medows. 'It was now evident,' says Major Rennell,²

¹ Another serious loss to Tipu was M. Lally. He was severely wounded and died later. He was succeeded by a cousin called de Vigie.

² *The Marches of the British Armies in the Peninsula of India* is the short title of a valuable narrative issued in pamphlet form by the topographer, Major J. Rennell, to accompany his map of the 1790-1 campaign. The second edition, dated 1792, was printed by Bulmer & Co. for the author.

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‘that the rapidity of Tippoo’s marches was such that no army appointed like ours could ever bring him to action in the open country; so that he could penetrate our line and affect his purposes, with impunity.’ One wonders, rather gloomily, how it would all have ended if in the third week in October Tipu had not been forced away northwards by a double impulsion—to get back across the Bhavani river before the spates began, and to keep an eye on the English Central Army which was approaching the Baramahal and in fact entered it on October 24th.

It may be surprising that the Central Army had come so late into the field. But this composite force of about 9,000 strong had had to be built up partly from such Madras units as Medows could spare and partly from a contingent of Bengal native infantry which had been marched down the 1,200 miles from Calcutta by Lieutenant-Colonel John Cockerell and did not reach Conjeeveram until August 1st. A camp was set up at Arni, where the necessary equipment and transport came slowly to hand. Then on September 24th the Army commander, Colonel Kelly, died, and another Colonel, named Maxwell, had to take over.¹

Maxwell’s first objective in the Baramahal, that rough broken country below the Eastern Ghats, was to capture its principal stronghold, Krishnagiri. A reconnaissance revealed the strength of the place and Maxwell hauled off until he could stage a surprise attack. Meanwhile he secured several minor fortresses, but by November 9th news came of Tipu’s army approaching via the pass of Tapoor, which links the Baramahal with Coimbatore province. Medows, eager now for a junction with Maxwell, was about three days behind, but when on the 15th he encamped at Damapori at the northern end of the Pass, he found Tipu’s tents pitched only thirteen miles away at the foot of the Ghats.

Things then moved fast; Medows hurried on to make contact with Maxwell at Caveripatam while Tipu, deciding that he did not want to be crunched up against the Ghats by the combined army,

¹ The status of the men chosen to command this important force, equivalent at least to a modern Division, illustrates again the Company’s denial of General rank to its officers—except when there were King’s officers to be by-passed!

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doubled back through the Tapoor Pass. The English were so close behind him that Colonel Stuart—commanding the right wing and as mobile as ever—believed that with a little audacity he could cut off a big section of the Mysorean foot. But Medows would not take the risk and finally the two armies marched through the Pass, somewhat absurdly, in procession.

And now Tipu once again showed himself his father's son—he took off at top speed for the Carnatic, just as Haidar would have done. 'Making three marches for one of ours,' as Rennell points out, he shifted a large army, with at least some guns, sixty-three miles in two days. Though he slowed down a trifle after that, he was on the north bank of the Cauvery just above Trichinopoly by November 28th. The weather was as bad as when Macartney's Commissioners were fording the Carnatic streams just seven years before, which was why Tipu, instead of trying to storm Trichinopoly, remained encamped across the river until the English were within one march of him. Then, as usual, he slipped away and began a long northern swing in the general direction of Pondicherry.

An eighty-mile stage took the Mysoreans to the town of Tiagar. This seemed easy meat, but the defender of the place, Captain Flint, lived up to his legend¹ and to the faith of thousands of refugees gathered round him, by driving back two assaults with heavy loss. Tipu, deciding not to waste time beating his head against the Flint walls, marched on northwards and found a readier prey in the pilgrimage town of Tiruvannamalai, which he sacked with great barbarity. And so, in the second week of January 1791, behold Tipu Sultan comfortably encamped on the classic ground of the Red Hills between Wandiwash and Pondicherry, and sending vakils to the French Governor as though the years since 1767 had been obliterated and General Medows's Grand Army had vanished with the mists of morning.

In point of fact it was on its way to Madras. As early as December 1st, it seems, Medows had received a hint that the Governor-General, unhappy about the way the campaign had gone so far, had reverted to his original plan of taking command

¹ He had conducted a celebrated defence of Wandiwash against Haidar Ali between 1780 and 1783. Wilks was moved to find him living obscurely in London in about 1817, a colonel, but with neither 'the honours nor the competency' his transcendent services deserved.

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himself. He arrived at Madras on December 12th, and though Meadows still clutched a dwindling hope of being allowed to 'resume his march to the upper country' in the New Year, orders reached his camp near Trichinopoly which left him no choice but to make for Madras with all convenient speed.

Cornwallis Meets his Nabob

‘WE have lost time and our adversary has gained reputation, which are the two most valuable things in war,’ wrote Cornwallis to Dundas on November 12th, 1790. And to his brother the Bishop of Lichfield four days later, ‘I have no other part to take but to go myself . . . and try whether I can do better . . . I have in this war everything to lose and nothing to gain. I shall derive no credit for beating Tippoo, and shall be for ever disgraced if he beats me.’

The old theme! The Governor-General had indeed met his ‘nabob’, but once he took command against him in person, there was no fumbling, no irresolution.

In spite of Medows’s largely abortive campaign, the prospects of the English and their allies were by no means bad when Cornwallis gathered his forces together at Vellout outside Madras, in the last week of January 1791. Coimbatore and Palghaut still provided a useful link with Malabar, and there a decisive advantage had been gained. On December 10th, 1790, Colonel Hartley, with a force of three battalions only, met a strong Mysorean army in a pitched field near Calicut, and completely routed it, Tipu’s general, Husain Ali Khan, being among the 900 prisoners.¹ Almost simultaneously, General Abercrombie himself appeared before Cannanore.

Here the Dowager Queen (the Bibi) had known strange vicissitudes since Brigadier-General Macleod’s arbitrary evacuation of her little State in April 1784. Just five years later Tipu Sultan, thwarted of an ambitious marriage alliance with the family of the Nizam, settled for something more modest by betrothing his second son, Abdul Khaliq, to her daughter. Through the anxious early months of 1790 the Company’s local officials, who would have attacked Cannanore if their forces had been stronger,² waited for the Bibi to declare herself, fearing that when she did it would be in Tipu’s favour. However in August, impressed, so she said, by the fidelity of the English to the Raja of Travancore, she

¹ 1,500 more were taken in Tipu’s new fortress of Ferokhabad.

² See *The Allies’ War with Tipu Sultan*, p. 115 *et seq.*

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made a secret engagement to help them in driving out Tipu's troops. Though she observed that 'this one fortunate moment had accomplished what she had wished for all her life',¹ a Mysorean army which advanced on Cannanore two months later was admitted without resistance. The final act—the almost bloodless capture of the place by Abercrombie—once more extorted the Bibi's real or affected gratitude; it was expressed this time by her gift to Major John Bellasis, the artillery commander, not only of the emerald ring off her finger, but of a carved chair said to have been the property of Tipu Sultan.²

The mopping up of the whole Malabar region was quickly finished off, and at the year's end Abercrombie was free to co-ordinate his movements with Cornwallis's and, by ascending the Western Ghats into the Coorg country, to threaten Seringapatam from the rear.

Any reader must be pardoned who has forgotten by now that the Third Mysore War was being waged by a triple alliance, and that in addition to the English operations I have described, the investment of Tipu's territory was supposed to be completed by the forces of the Nizam and the Peshwa, shoulder to shoulder along his northern boundary. In fact neither of these powers influenced in any degree the campaign of 1790.

The Nizam started to muster his huge but ill-disciplined host at Hyderabad at about the same time that Medows began his march from Trichinopoly. Mahabat Jung was placed in command, the stipulated English contingent—two sepoy battalions and an artillery company—joined him, and on July 1st what Wilks calls 'a gorgeous mass, numerically sufficient for the conquest of the whole peninsular', rolled ponderously across the Krishna and came to a full stop at Raichur, still inside the Nizam's territory. There it remained until news of Tipu's descent into the Coimbatore country emboldened Mahabat Jung to cross the Mysore frontier at its remotest point. The first step was to lay siege to the massive fortress of Koppal. In spite of effective work by the English artillery under Captain Andrew Read, little progress was made, and we can leave the Nizam's forces thus engaged for the next six months.

¹ Home Misc. 567, I.O.R., f. 217.

² The chair now stands in the hall of the Oriental Club, London. See D. M. Forrest, *The Oriental* (London, Batsford, 1968), p. 211.

CORNWALLIS MEETS HIS NABOB

It seemed that the Marathas were going to be quicker off the mark, as it was in March 1790 that their famous general, Parashuram Bhau, was placed at the head of a force which, with the Nizam on its left flank and Abercrombie on its right, was to close the iron ring round Tipu. But in contrast with Hyderabad, the Marathas were in manpower difficulties,¹ and it was not until August 1st that an army of about 15,000 strong crossed the Krishna about sixty miles west of Koppal. With Parashuram Bhau went his two promised English battalions—this time provided from Bombay. Their commander was Captain Little, and for the rest of the Maratha campaign every historian turns thankfully to the *Narrative of Captain Little's Detachment*, written by Lieutenant Edward Moor (then aged twenty-one) and published in 1794. I only regret that space is not going to permit more liberal quotation from this spirited and often amusing compilation—perhaps the best book to come out of the Third Mysore War.

The Marathas, like the Nizam, began with a siege, almost equally long and much more fiercely contested. The fortress attacked was Dharwar, the *chef-lieu* of that region between the rivers where we saw Tipu manœuvring so skilfully after his crossing of the Tungabhadra in August 1786. We shall be returning there, as to Koppal.

It may be recalled that, apart from their main armies, the Nizam and the Peshwa were each pledged to supply the English with a corps of cavalry—the arm in which the Company's forces had always been weakest. Neither was ready, nor indeed required, until the year 1791 was well under way.

Such was the picture seen by Cornwallis when—a fighting general once more, but still of course wielding full civil as well as military power over the whole of British India—he sat down to plan the next phase of the campaign. He knew just what he intended to do. There were to be no more great enveloping movements, no more occupation of vast supply areas in the south, however productive. He was going straight up the Ghats, and by a route as far out of Tipu's sight as possible.

General Medows, with perfect loyalty and good humour, joined

¹ Scindhia, the most powerful of the Maratha military chieftains, took no part in the Third Mysore War—he was too busy with his own conquests in Central India.

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Cornwallis as Second-in-Command, and by the beginning of February 1791, all was ready. On the 5th the Grand Army moved off,¹ and on the 11th reached Vellore, some seventy-five miles west of Madras. Here they picked up their battering train and extra gunners. From Vellore the obvious approach to Bangalore (which Cornwallis intended to reduce first) and Seringapatam was due west, via Ambur. So a battalion was sent, in the style of an advance guard, some way down the Ambur road, but when the main body left Vellore it swung north to Chittoor. Here it turned west again and made for the Pass of Mugli.²

As passes through the Ghats went, Mugli (thirty-five miles on from Vellore) was a fairly easy one, steep of course, in places, but three days' hard work by the pioneers produced a practicable road surface. Rennell quotes an eye-witness of the ascent:

The draft bullocks were not taken out of the yokes, and with the assistance of the troops at the guide ropes, and the elephants pushing from behind, the whole of the heavy guns were got up in a few hours.³

On February 20th, for the first time since 1769, an English Army stood on the summit of the Eastern Ghats, with the Mysore tableland spread out before it, and it had got there without firing a shot.

So where was Tipu Sultan?

He had lingered hopefully for six weeks in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. But in his negotiations with the French he was in truth on the worst possible wicket. The Pondicherry garrison had been withdrawn in 1789, and soon after (May 13th 1790) the Comte de Conway, French Governor-General in the East, had written to Cornwallis assuring him that there did not exist any treaty of alliance between Tipu Sultan and the French nation:

¹ Because neither Wilks, Mackenzie nor Rennell happens to mention the size of Cornwallis's force, no modern writer—not even Fortescue—does either! But the *Madras Courier's* correspondent (Feb. 4th, 1791) says it was between 18,000 and 19,000 fighting men.

² Cornwallis's earliest intention was, in fact, to follow the Ambur route. Captain Beatson then made a survey of Mugli, and it is said that only five pioneers were told of the decision to use it.

³ Plate 8b shows an identical scene.

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His Majesty (he added) has been pleased to receive the Ambassadors, which that Prince thought proper to send to France in 1787, with that magnificence and generosity which characterises him, but it is a matter of certainty that no sort of engagement has been entered into. . . . The faith of France, the honour of the nation and her well-known interest, all must positively prescribe to us a strict neutrality.

But nothing would ever wake Tipu from his dream of French military aid. One more embassy was hatched, and M. Léger, *Administrateur-Général*, actually agreed to go to Paris and ask for the loan of 6,000 troops; in exchange, Tipu promised to destroy the armies of the English, and hand their possessions over to the King of France.

Tipu's last initiative on the Coromandel coast was to raid Porto Novo and panic the inhabitants of Cuddalore by a summons to surrender. Just then, however, came the news that Cornwallis was en route for Vellore. On February 8th Tipu broke camp and moved off towards Gingi, where he remained until the 16th. On the 19th or 20th he mounted the Changama Pass above the Baramahal, and regained the heartland of his kingdom. But he was too late. Cornwallis's decision to advance via Mugli had outwitted him completely, in fact it seems almost to have dazed him, since he did not attempt to meet the English head-on and staged only a perfunctory threat to their highly vulnerable supply lines. His sole overt step was to visit Bangalore in order to inspect its defences and to depose a doubtfully loyal Killedar: a subsidiary purpose—made much of by the old English chroniclers—was to remove his zenana to safety.

Cornwallis was now approaching. He had paused for a few days while further provisions and transport reached him, including a notable convoy of sixty-seven elephants brought overland from Bengal.¹ This was in fact the first English campaign in India in which elephants were used on a large scale—there had been a misconception that they required enormous quantities of rice, but now, living largely off the country and shifting vast loads, they proved themselves indispensable. More orthodox power was provided by 6,000 draught and 20,000 carriage bullocks.

¹ Over 200 elephants had been collected in Oudh alone for the purposes of the Mysore War.

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The eighty-nine miles to Bangalore were covered in eight marches. On the first of these there was an outbreak of village-burning and looting, which suggests how little the army still knew about Cornwallis; nine ringleaders were executed at once and a General Order (February 26th) called on every officer to put an end to 'these scenes of horror, which if they should be suffered to continue, must defeat all our hopes of success, and blast the British name with infamy'.

The second day's march brought the Grand Army to Colar, where many of the troops visited the shrine of Haidar Ali's father, and during the third the Mysorean cavalry made their first appearance, but did no harm. It was not until the English reached Kistnaporam, ten miles short of Bangalore, that Tipu launched a demonstration in force and had his own first sight of the enemy forces since the Pass of Tapoor. Finally on March 5th Cornwallis, handling his troops with much-admired dexterity, came to his ground under the walls of Bangalore.

As in so many of the sieges of the Mysore Wars, a double operation now followed—first the occupation of the *pettah*, or commercial town, then the reduction of the citadel. In the case of Bangalore, the former as well as the latter was a place of strength. The city was oval in form, with a circular bulge on the south side representing the citadel; it was surrounded by a deep dry ditch and an exceptionally thick hedge, or rather jungle, of bamboo, thorns and prickly pear, a hundred yards deep.

On the 6th, Cornwallis moved his troops nearer the walls and the same afternoon there was a dangerous affair in which Colonel Floyd, reconnoitring the east side of the citadel with Cornwallis's entire cavalry, was tempted to attack the rear of one of Tipu's columns. The thrust was going well when Floyd was shot in the face and, though not killed, fell from his horse 'as though struck by a cannon ball'.¹ Confusion followed, and the English were lucky to escape with modest casualties, but with the loss of far more horses than Cornwallis could afford. That evening, for the

¹ In spite of having most of his teeth in both jaws knocked out, Floyd made a remarkably quick recovery. The bullet lodged in the back of his neck and he carried it with him to the grave, 'his son Henry Floyd rightly determining that the two [his father and the bullet] should not be parted even in death'. See the *Memoir of General Sir John Floyd, Bart., K.P.*, compiled by his grandson, Walter Floyd (Bombay, Education Society's Press, 1880), pp. 78–80.

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first and only time, his staff saw the Commander-in-Chief give way to petulance against one of his own officers.

The assault on the pettah was launched the next morning. The point of attack was a double gateway on the north side, remote from the citadel. The inner gate had been walled up solid on the inside, and with the Mysoreans firing from every turret and rooftop, the forcing of an entrance was a stern task. At length a hole was made big enough for the slim form of Lieutenant Ayre, of the 36th, to squeeze through. Close up to the breach was General Medows, always happier under fire than playing Supreme Commander. 'Well done!' he called out, 'and now, whiskers, try if you can follow and support the little gentleman!' The 'whiskers'—Grenadiers of the 36th—responded and the gate was forced. Resistance continued, however, and later in the day Tipu, who, confident in the strength of the pettah, had taken up his position six miles away, made a belated attempt to reinforce the garrison. It was useless. The bayonet drove the Mysoreans from one quarter of the town to another, and finally the remains of their forces retired into the citadel.

The booty included timely stores of grain which for the moment postponed the crisis which was to bring Cornwallis very close to disaster—the lack of feed for his huge host of draught and carriage animals.

The other half of the Bangalore operation, the storming of the citadel, was carried out in circumstances which, as Fortescue¹ has said, remind one of Delhi two generations later—'the besiegers . . . were themselves in a fashion besieged, for the garrison opposed to them was constantly relieved, while the whole of the enemy's field force lay in constant menace before them'. As Cornwallis's battering train thundered against the fortress walls, with their twenty-six round towers and other massive works, his cavalry constantly headed off Tipu's probing columns.

All the most experienced talent, including Qamar-ud-din and Saiyid Saheb (reinstated for the emergency) was engaged on the Mysorean side, but an equivocal role was played by the head of Tipu's Treasury, Krishna Rao. We met him first in Chapter 7, as one of the two 'very acute Hindoos' who negotiated with the Commissioners at Mangalore, but further back still he took a leading part in Tipu's succession to the kingdom after Haidar

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 569.

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Ali's death. Tipu now sent him to Bangalore to ensure the removal of the public treasure and other valuables, and Mohibbul Hasan (more or less following Kirmani) declares that he conveyed a hint to the English as to the most favourable moment for assaulting the citadel.¹ C. Hayavadana Rao also explores at some length the possible links between this man and the 'loyalist' conspirators of Mysore. The evidence is inconclusive; Wilks mentions that Purnaiya, the other 'acute Hindoo' of Mangalore, could never be brought to discuss the matter. It is only one of several episodes in which Tipu's most fervent admirers have been driven to attribute his defeat to the treachery of those nearest to him.

With or without the help of the Fifth Columnists, the English chose the night of March 21st for the final assault on the citadel of Bangalore. In silence under the dazzling moon, the grenadiers of seven King's regiments advanced with scaling ladders into a partial breach which had been made in the wall opposite the pettah. Flank companies swung off to left and right, clearing the ramparts with the bayonet, and they finally met at the Mysore Gate on the outer face of the citadel. The gate soon became choked with fugitives, over a thousand of whose bodies were subsequently counted. An earlier casualty had been the Killedar, a fine old soldier called Bahadur Khan, who had been brought up from Krishnagiri to take over the defence. Cornwallis looked with emotion on the handsome, white-bearded face of his adversary and offered to send his body to Tipu for burial. The suggestion was courteously declined and Bahadur Kahn was interred on the scene of his last battle.

Tipu himself seems to have been taken by surprise by the speed and success of the assault. Though he had unsuccessfully tried to send reinforcements and on the night of the 21st his army was only a mile and a half from the Mysore Gate, the crowd of refugees bursting out of it was his first intimation that the citadel had fallen.

It was not too late, however, for revenge on Krishna Rao. The

¹ Kirmani says that (thanks to Krishna Rao) the English knew when Tipu was about to attack; Wilks says that Tipu knew when the English were about to attack! Rumours of treachery were obviously flying about.

The main references are: Kirmani, *Tipu Sultan*, pp. 182-93; Wilks, Vol. III, pp. 129 and 142-3; C. Hayavadana Rao, Vol. III, pp. 889-996, Mohibbul Hasan, pp. 202-3.

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versatile Saiyid Saheb was the chosen instrument—if indeed he was not something more, since one version of this dark story is that he invented the whole conspiracy, to pay off an ancient grudge over the accounts of Dindigul. In any case Krishna Rao and his three brothers perished horribly at his hands. Tradition makes reference to a cauldron of boiling oil.

The formidable power of the English, now that most of the old faults of organisation and leadership had been put right, was now fully proved, and the effect of the fall of Bangalore on their great enemy's prestige was both immediate and lasting. But Tipu was not beaten yet. The point will always be argued—as with Fullarton's enforced halt at Coimbatore—whether Cornwallis might have ended the war out of hand by marching at once upon Seringapatam. The sober view is that in the desperate state of his transport and with Tipu's main army still intact and poised to intercept him, it would have been a naked gamble. England's only army-in-being in India would be at risk, and from Cornwallis's personal point of view, there could be no retrieving another Yorktown.

Instead, he moved his troops as quickly as possible from their pestilential camp, stinking with the bodies of dead and dying bullocks, and on March 28th set off north-eastward. He had three objectives—to make contact with the forces of the Nizam, to find better forage for his animals, and to cover the approach of important convoys coming up the Ghats. Tipu was moving in the same direction—in fact at one moment his columns crossed ahead of the English line of march. Cornwallis's men, seizing the guide-ropes and bringing the cannon forward at a run, engaged his rearguard successfully, but were too exhausted to do more.

And now, as we follow the slow northward drift of the armies, we find ourselves back in the region where this story started. While Cornwallis marches through Tipu's birthplace, Devanhalli, Tipu retreats towards his father's, Doddballapur. But to the English, of course, these were only milestones on an increasingly anxious journey in search of those 10,000 horsemen from Hyderabad. It was on January 4th that the Nizam had volunteered to produce them whenever Cornwallis named the place of junction;

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early in February they began to assemble under a general¹ called Raja Tejwant, and to him on the 23rd of that month Cornwallis sent an urgent appeal to bring his cavalry forward to the siege of Bangalore. It was all useless. Tejwant did not move from his camp near Genjikottah until March 12th. He travelled two miles and halted five days. By the 22nd he had covered twenty-six and a half miles. He then asked Cornwallis to meet him at a place called Chintamanipet, east of Chickballapur. Cornwallis got there on April 8th. No sign of Tejwant. It was not until the 13th that the two armies at last came together at Kotapalli, about eighty-four miles north of Bangalore.

Visually, the Nizam's cavalry—10,000 to 15,000 men on splendid horses—were well worth waiting for. Wilks must be quoted:

It is probable that no national or private collection of ancient armour in Europe contains any weapon or article of personal equipment which might not be traced in this motley crowd; the Parthian bow and arrow, the iron club of Scythia, sabres of every age and nation, lances of every length and description, metallic helmets of every pattern, simple defences of the head, a steel bar descending diagonally as a protection to the face; defences of bars, scales or chain work descending behind or on the shoulders, cuirasses, suits of armour . . . quilted jackets, sabre proof.

The ostentatious display of these antique novelties was equally curious in their kind. The free and equal use of two sword arms, the precise and perfect command of a balanced spear 18 feet long, of the club which was to shiver an iron helmet, of the arrow discharged in flight, but above all the total absence of order, or obedience, or command, excepting groups collected round their respective flags; every individual an independent warrior, self-impelled, affecting to be the champion whose single arm was to achieve victory; scampering among each other in wild confusion.²

Hoping for the best, Cornwallis arranged to attach a chosen 3,000 of these romantic but unbiddable warriors to Colonel

¹ But when pressed really hard by the English to get moving, he bleated 'I am only an accountant' (Lieut. Steuart to Lord Cornwallis, March 22nd, 1791: *The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, p. 359). The whole correspondence with and about Tejwant induces an almost physical sense of stickiness and frustration.

² Vol. III, pp. 135-6.

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Floyd's brigade, with Major Dallas as the ideal liaison officer. All to no purpose—few of them turned up, and the only alacrity they showed was in devouring forage and grain and in setting fire to villages. Even the courtly Cornwallis, whose cavalry so urgently needed relief in their endless patrol and reconnaissance duties, was moved to complain in bitter terms to Tejwant and, through Captain Kennaway, to the Nizam himself.

Still, the junction was accomplished, and the whole force could now turn for Bangalore, picking up on the way a particularly rich convoy which Major Oldham had escorted from Ambur with 4,000 fresh troops. Cornwallis was back in Bangalore by April 28th, and everyone got ready for what it was hoped would be the final push on Seringapatam. Meanwhile Tipu, who had been following the motions of the English army at a safe distance, took up a strong position near Chennapatna about half-way along the main road to the capital.

On May 4th the English moved off, in much better shape than five weeks before, but still hampered by lack of transport. 'To the immortal honour of the officers', says Major Rennell, 2,500 bullocks were transferred from private to public use, and while his tribute to 'this generous act of self-denial' seems a little high-pitched, we may heave a brief sigh over those stocks of linens, trunks of table equipage and piles of folding furniture which no doubt had to be jettisoned. And one wonders what any surviving 'dulcineas' thought when the women and children of the expedition were each invited to add an eighteen-pounder shot to their hand baggage.

Cornwallis, prudently, did not follow the Chennapatna road; instead he chose a more southerly route via Kankanhalli and Sultanpettah. He had two motives—the obvious one of avoiding Tipu's entrenched position, and the other to get as soon as possible to the south side of the Cauvery river. This would enable him to join hands with Abercrombie, who had brought the Bombay Army safely up the Ghats and was encamped at Periapatam, about three marches west of Seringapatam. Most writers, following Wilks, suggest that the heavy rain, which was already making the going desperately difficult, also frustrated the search for a practicable ford. But Cornwallis, in his long despatch to the Court of Directors dated September 7th,¹ goes out of his way to

¹ *Correspondence*, Vol. II, Appendix LIV.

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stress that the Cauvery was at its lowest during the greater part of May and that it was the nature of its bed—'rocky and difficult beyond what I have ever seen'—that defied his efforts to get his heavy guns across.

So the English tramped on, through villages every one of which had been 'laid in ashes' and without an inhabitant in sight, and when they found the ford at Arikeri, nine miles below Seringapatam, as useless as the others, Cornwallis made a bold decision. He would try after all to pass Seringapatam on the *north* side, and risk a general action with the main army of Mysore.

Tipu had now moved back to defend his capital and at the same time to bar Cornwallis's route to the west. The general topography of Seringapatam and its approaches will be explained more fully later; enough to say here that the position chosen by Tipu was extremely strong; to the right it rested on the broad Cauvery river below (i.e. east of) the island on which Seringapatam is built, and it then extended along a rocky ridge protected by swamps and a long ravine. Cornwallis saw at once that a frontal assault was hopeless; the only approach which would give him any advantage over Tipu was a wide detour northward and a night attack, turning the enemy's left flank.

Accordingly, at 11 p.m. on May 14th, a force of six European and twelve Indian infantry battalions, together with 1,000 cavalry and thirty-six field guns (bullock-drawn, of course) was mustered. The Nizam's cavalry was to follow at day-break. Cornwallis himself took command. By great though not freakish ill-fortune—considering the season—a colossal thunderstorm with torrential rain began just before the army was due to move off. The horses and draught cattle were terrified and could hardly be got to move; when the columns did start they constantly lost their way and there was a moment when the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief found himself far out in front with one infantry company and one gun. The night attack had to be called off and the wet, dispirited troops lay on their arms until dawn enabled them—and the enemy—to find out where they were and to join battle as best they might.

Actually, all the English saw as they looked towards the ridges at first light, were a few Mysoreans peacefully spreading out their wet clothes to dry. The surprise would have been complete . . . But, of course, Tipu grasped the situation at once, and took

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prompt steps to prevent the turning of his flank. Running away north-west, more or less at right-angles to his original position, was a further range of low hills. Qamar-ud-din was hustled off with a strong force to occupy it. The English raced him there, but Qamar won. So there was nothing for it but—down into the ravine under heavy fire, form up if you can in the dead ground at the bottom, and then forward to the assault! The chosen leader was Colonel Maxwell, and he was given five battalions with which to do the job. It was eleven o'clock before the whole English line was fully deployed, but then, while the main forces engaged in the centre, Maxwell stormed the all-important hill. Floyd with the cavalry followed through, and Tipu's flank might well have been turned after all if a mass of the Nizam's horsemen had not somehow got themselves athwart Maxwell's front and given the Mysoreans a chance to pull themselves together and start a fighting withdrawal.

The engagement ended with Tipu's forces safe within the walls of Seringapatam, where they stayed while Cornwallis, after forty-eight hours of recuperation, made a painful detour to his objective, the Kannambadi ford eight miles up river. It had been an English victory, but it left Tipu temporarily with the whip hand.¹

Cornwallis at Kannambadi (which he reached on the 19th) was in fact desperately in need of help from some, from any, quarter. The vigilance of Tipu's roving light horse—an almost decisive element in this whole campaign—had cut his communications with Abercrombie. Nor was there a whisper from the Marathas who, as we shall see, were supposed by now to be marching on Seringapatam. Meanwhile the rain fell and the cattle went on dying.

On the 21st, Cornwallis sent off a message to Abercrombie telling him to get back down to Malabar; on the 22nd—with what sickness of heart we can only imagine—he ordered the whole of his own battering train and other heavy equipment to be destroyed, preparatory to a retreat on Bangalore. Before he marched, having still heard nothing from Abercrombie, and having been told of a strong enemy force moving towards Periapattam, he despatched Stuart across the Cauvery with three brigades, to try and make a

¹ By far the best account of operations from now onwards is Major Alexander Dirom's *Narrative of the Campaign in India* (London, printed by W. Bulmer, 1793). We have already met him (as Captain Dirom) furnishing Intelligence reports.

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diversion in the Bombay Army's favour. However, Abercrombie had received the message of the 21st, and had started for the coast at two o'clock in the morning of the 24th. His last act, like Cornwallis's, was to spike the heavy guns which had been intended to batter down the walls of Seringapatam.

On May 24th, under drizzle and a fierce wind, and with every animal that could still stand being used for conveyance of the sick, Cornwallis's army set out for Bangalore. They had made just half the first day's appointed march when a troop of horse, 2,000 strong, appeared in their front. The alarm was sounded, and firing had actually begun before it was realised that the approaching cavalry were Marathas. A great host followed, bringing in their train the characteristic Maratha bazaar or travelling market. From this Cornwallis's hard-pressed troops and almost starving camp followers were supplied—amply, though at a price! Useless to lament that this was all one week too late; useless, with the siege guns 'burst', to think of remounting the attack on Seringapatam. Cornwallis moved back to Bangalore by easy stages, and while he is considering how best to occupy his time until the end of the monsoon, we had better account for this sudden apparition of Marathas, and also take note of what has been happening to the main forces of the other member of the Triple Alliance, the Nizam.

Throughout the events described in this chapter, up to the time of Cornwallis's junction with the Nizam's cavalry, the Maratha army under Parashuram Bahu had been ineffectually pursuing the siege of Dharwar. Exactly three months (September 18th to December 18th, 1790) was spent on capturing the pettah, defended by another of Tipu's veteran Killedars, his kinsman Badr-uz-zaman, with a garrison which had been reinforced to over 10,000 men. After that, as usual, the citadel had to be tackled. The assailants' great lack was siege artillery, and the use of such guns as the Marathas possessed was subject to trade union rules which are pleasantly recorded by Moor:

A gun is loaded, and the whole people of the battery sit down, talk and smoke for half-an-hour, when it is fired and if it knocks

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up a great dust it is thought sufficient; it is reloaded, and the parties resume their smoking and conversation. During two hours in the middle of the day, generally from one to three, a gun is seldom fired on either side, the time being, as it would appear by mutual consent, set apart for meals.¹

It may well be that the ordnance itself was not up to a full day's work. Referring to one of the besiegers' larger guns Malet remarks:

The partiality for it here is so great that they have not thought proper to exchange it, alleging that though a little crooked it carries very straight. May it in this be emblematic of their politics.²

The real tragedy was that when the commander of the English contingent, Captain Little, made urgent representations to Bombay, the reinforcements the government sent up under Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick included a number of artillerymen—but no heavy guns.

Frederick, taking over from Little the virtual direction of the siege, was in a cruel position—'the only Company's officer commanding in the field', as Moor³ puts it, 'set down before a fortress of this importance without a single requisite for reducing it, and subject to the delays and irksome frivolity of our tardy allies'. Nevertheless, on February 7th he gritted his teeth and ordered an assault. It was brought to a standstill and finally called off after the Killedar had set fire to the fascines (bundles of dry wood) on which the attackers hoped to cross the ditch. The loss to the little English force was eighty-five men. Frederick, already in poor health, sank under the blow, and died on March 13th. He was succeeded by a German artillery major called John Sartorius—a great Indian Army name of the future.

It was not until March 30th, nine days after the fall of Bangalore, that the Killedar consented to treat, and on April 4th he marched out with colours flying. Edward Moor salutes him: 'there was an interesting dejection in his countenance which, added to

¹ *Narrative of Captain Little's Detachment*, p. 30.

² Malet to Cornwallis, November 19th, 1790 (*The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, p. 230).

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

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the esteem which every soldier must feel for so gallant a brother, could not fail of exciting a sympathetic emotion'.

Moor and the rest of the English were the more shocked when, a few days later, Parashuram Bhau made a dubious breach of the capitulation terms an excuse for attacking and plundering the survivors of the garrison, and despatching Badr-uz-zaman to a fortress prison.

With Dharwar at last in his hands, the Bhau (as contemporaries called him) was able quickly to reclaim Tipu's conquests beyond the Tungabhadra. Remaining on the far side of the river, and ignoring a strong plea by Captain Little (once again commanding a reduced detachment) that he should join hands with Abercrombie, he went campaigning off on his own in the direction of Bednur. Meanwhile, on January 1st, another and eventually larger army under the Maratha Commander-in-Chief, Haripant Phadke, had set out eastwards from Poona. Moving with a procrastination rivalling Tejwant's, he reached the Nizam's borders near Kurnool in early March, and spent a fortnight conferring with him at Pangal. It was from Haripant's force that the Marathas were supposed to furnish the English with their 10,000 horse; they had in fact been detached under his son when news came that Cornwallis had already been joined by the Nizam's cavalry and was concentrating at Bangalore, and after that they were called off.

At last, in mid-May, Haripant moved towards Seringapatam, occupying Sira en route, and summoned Parashuram Bhau to join him. They met at Nagmangaluni, nine miles north of Seringapatam, on May 24th. Two days later, as we have already seen, the combined armies crossed the line of Cornwallis's retreat. Even now, the Marathas had done little or nothing to embarrass Tipu's strategy or (apart from the timely arrival of their bazaar) to take the weight of the war off the backs of the English.

Less effective still had been the forces of the Nizam. *Their* long-term siege, that of Koppal, lasted until April 18th when, under the direct influence of the fall of Bangalore, the Killedar decided to give in.

The helpful thing then, of course, would have been for the Hyderabad army to march due south to threaten Seringapatam, 200 miles away by the Sira road. But that would have brought it into close contact with the Marathas, which is just what the

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Nizam wanted to avoid. So instead, he gave orders for a vast south-easterly swing into the Cuddapah country. This was former Hyderabad territory which he had always hoped to recover, and in fact it later became part of the 'Ceded Districts'.¹ There in September his forces took root for yet another time-consuming siege, that of the strong hill-fortress of Gurramkonda. We can again leave them to this occupation, and return to Cornwallis at Bangalore.

Although, as I have said, it was not the swollen state of the Cauvery river which frustrated the English on their first march towards Seringapatam, they recognised that the monsoon floods would become an insuperable barrier to the capture of Tipu's island capital. A favourable season would not in fact recur until November, so that Cornwallis, who arrived back at Bangalore on July 11th, had at least three months to prepare his next stroke—as it turned out, six proved not too long for the work he had to do. It would have made no difference to his programme (though it might have to his peace of mind) could he have seen the derisive cartoons with which, by September, the satirists of London exploited earlier setbacks, the wind and rain of the monsoon being provided, with rude vigour, by Tipu Sultan and his horse.²

Taken in strict date order, Cornwallis's operations seem diffuse and difficult to grasp, but they make complete sense when regrouped under their objectives. These were: to free the army's supply lines so that the vast convoys needed to feed and re-equip it could come up from the Carnatic without hindrance; to reduce the hill forts north-east of Bangalore which threatened communications with the Nizam's army besieging Gurramkonda; and to deal similarly with Tipu's strongholds on the line of the next advance to Seringapatam.³

The ideal supply route from the Carnatic to Bangalore was via the Pass of Palakad, leading straight down into the Baramahal country; it provided better going than the Ambur route and was, of course, much more direct than Mugli. Palakad was guarded at

¹ Districts handed over to the Nizam by Tipu, and later ceded by the former to the British in lieu of a cash subsidy for military aid.

² See also p. 347.

³ There is some evidence from Cornwallis' own dispatches that he might have risked waiving this third operation if his convoys had come more quickly to hand.

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the top by the fortress of Hosur (Ossore in the old maps) and at the bottom by Rayakottai. Thither, accordingly, Cornwallis marched. Major Gowdie, with his 7th Brigade, was the spearhead, and to him Hosur surrendered rather tamely on July 15th. Relics were found here of three unfortunate English prisoners, murdered after the fall of Bangalore.

On then to Rayakottai, built upon a great rock (Plate 8a) and by repute much more formidable than Hosur. But after Gowdie had got a lodgment on the lower slopes this Killedar also lost heart, asked for a parley and having been granted a safe conduct to the Carnatic and maybe a slight inducement in cash, agreed to yield his charge. Other neighbouring forts were soon reduced and the army returned well content to Hosur.

The benefits of this swift operation were made visible only three weeks later when a memorable convoy, which had travelled from Ambur via Rayakottai and the Palakad Pass, marched triumphantly into camp. It was led by a pair of elephants with Union Jacks at the masthead, and behind them came ninety-eight more, marshalled two abreast—‘a sight’, says Dirom, ‘fit to grace an eastern triumph’.¹ Each bore the equivalent of sixteen bullock-loads of supplies, but the convoy also included 6,000 bullocks carrying rice, 100 carts loaded with arrack and ‘some thousands of coolies with trunks and baskets of private supplies’. Altogether the almost inspired energy of Captain Alexander Read and the other ‘Q’ experts had mobilised 28,000 bullocks to service the Grand Army, and yet managed to dispatch another 10,000 to Abercrombie via Palghaut.

A second operation to safeguard the Baramahal route was necessary in late October, when some of Tipu’s cavalry began to make incursions from the Coimbatore side, and he also managed to reinforce the garrison of Krishnagiri, the only important stronghold left to him in those parts. This time the English commander was Colonel Maxwell, and though he quickly chased the raiders out, he did not succeed in capturing Krishnagiri citadel—a notoriously tough nut since the days of Colonel Smith.

Activities north-east of Bangalore began on September 14th. And here, remembering my self-denying ordinance in the matter of sieges, I must pass more swiftly than they deserve over a series of feats of arms as audacious as any achieved by English troops in

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

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eighteenth-century India. This was the capture, one after another, of the 'droogs', or precipitous limestone rocks, crowned with strong fortresses, which punctuate the Mysore landscape. Once more Major Gowdie was in command. On September 14th he attacked Raymanghur, about thirty-five miles from Bangalore, and quickly frightened the Killedar into surrender.¹ On the 22nd he began the siege of the towering fortress of Nandidrug, a few miles to the west. With fearful exertions, in which elephants played an intelligent part, a gun-road was made up the mountain face and by October 17th a practicable breach was reported. When it came to the final assault, who but General Medows should claim the dangerous service? Under heavy but erratic fire and the much more alarming discharge of enormous rocks down the mountain side, the storm was triumphantly achieved. Such was the affair in which the Madras Europeans (p. 138, n.) won their belated battle honour.

Before leaving Nandidrug, we must spend a moment with its Killedar. He turned out to be Lutf Ali Beg, of Mangalore (1767) and the Constantinople Embassy! 'Old and very respectable' by now (he was sixty), he also proved communicative. One of his dicta, as recorded by Dirom, stays in the memory: 'we mistook Tipu's character, he said, if we imagined that he would ever give up his sovereignty and solicit a pension to get fat on like an old woman (such was his expression) for the rest of his life'.²

Two more major 'droogs' remained to be neutralised. The first was Savandurga (Savandroog—the notorious 'Rock of Death'), a prodigious mountain dominating the northern route which Cornwallis intended to follow to Seringapatam. Its base was eight miles round; a still wider circumference was covered with dense thorn and bamboo; all the approaches were guarded by walls, and at the top the rock split into two peaks each crowned by a citadel. The

¹ *The Madras Courier* carried a story about this (Sept. 29th) which it evidently thought rather moving. The Killedar, it says, was a gallant old soldier, worn out with toil and hardships, who had been wounded at Bangalore. Finding him down to his last fanam, Major Gowdie tipped him fifty rupees, all he had with him. 'Impossible to describe the scene which followed... gratitude and surprise in the countenance of the poor old captive... the worthy Major obeying the dictates of his excellent heart, though he had himself been a prisoner loaded with chains in a dungeon not far distant,' etc. etc.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 50

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alleged impregnability of Savandurga—did it not once defy the Marathas for three years?—might have been vindicated had the spirit of the defenders matched its physical strength. Yet one remains incredulous that it was in fact stormed by the Grand Army in daylight, without the loss of a man. A short bombardment forced a breach; at 11 a.m. on September 21st the band of the 52nd Foot gave the signal with 'Britons Strike Home'; the defence collapsed in confusion, and within an hour both peaks were in Cornwallis's hands.

Colonel Stuart did the mopping up. At Hutridurga ('Outre-droog') twelve miles further on, the Killedar was as defiant as he had been once before, but even his unleashing of a herd of wild cattle which (like Dr. Johnson) 'tossed and gored several persons', did not stem the assault. A parley was asked for, during which the English suspected treachery. The troops rushed forward, and when they broke into the citadel, no quarter was given. As usual, the lesser posts round about quickly surrendered, and the road to Seringapatam was open.

The Tiger brought to Bay

IT would have been out of character if all this time Tipu had kept his forces cooped up in his capital. But the options open to him were narrow. Short of gambling on a direct sortie against the Grand Army, any large scale movement by his main body would leave the heart of Mysore exposed to the English and their allies. He chose instead an operation which, if successful, would at little expense cause the maximum unease to his opponents. He sent off a small force under the son of Badr-uz-zaman, the defender of Dharwar, to capture Coimbatore.

One hesitates to compute how many times this feat had been accomplished in the previous thirty years, by the Mysoreans or their enemies. Coimbatore was important, but was not considered defensible, which was one reason why everyone operating in that region made a point of securing its much more formidable neighbour Palghaut. Thus, while the latter was entrusted to a proper garrison under Major Cuppage (he whose Vellore sepoys were returned with thanks on p. 77), young Lieutenant Chalmers at Coimbatore had only 120 Topasses¹ and an even smaller number of Travancoreans under a Frenchman named de la Combe. But the spirit of Captain Flint was abroad. A summons to surrender, accompanied by bloodthirsty threats, was ignored, and a general assault launched after three weeks of bombardment was flung back with many casualties. If it was Chalmers who ordered fused powder barrels to be rolled down on the assailants, it was de la Combe who rallied the Travancoreans when their nerve began to break. The worst was already over by the time Cuppage, coming up in some force from Palghaut, drove away the remaining besiegers and chased them headlong across the Bhavani River.

There was a pause of nearly two months, but on October 4th the enemy reappeared in strength, headed by no less a commander than Qamar-ud-din. Chalmers, himself reinforced, was quickly under pressure. Cuppage set out to relieve him as before, but he was outmanœuvred by Qamar, who with a right hook got between

¹ Christians of mixed descent.

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him and Palghaut. The English commander, fearful of losing his base and also feeling responsibility for a big convoy coming up from Dindigul, carried out a harassed retreat, and on November 2nd, Coimbatore surrendered. On Tipu's personal orders, Chalmers and his men were sent as prisoners to Seringapatam. The English considered this to be a breach of the capitulation terms. Chalmers insisted that the set he signed, written in English and Hindustani,¹ made no mention of the garrison being 'at the disposal of the Sultan'; the equivalent words only occurred in a Persian text which he did not understand. We shall hear more of this affair.

Qamar-ud-din remained in the Coimbatore country until February 1792, when he was sent by Tipu to make sure that Parashuram Bhau did not capture Bednur, but he made no further move against the English bases and communications.²

Before we move to the final scenes of the Third Mysore War, something must be said about the peace negotiations which, as ever in this story, provided a hesitant undertone to the noises of battle. They were nearly always launched either in the wrong form or at the wrong moment, but the whole feeling of the time was inimical to their success.

An early instance was at the very beginning of the struggle, when Tipu wrote to Medows (May 22nd, 1790) offering to send a vakil to 'remove the dust which had obscured the upright mind' of the General.³ But as this was in reply to a letter of April 6th, and can hardly have been received before the Grand Army marched from Trichinopoly on May 26th, it is understandable that Medows, regarding the die as cast, replied rather flamboyantly that 'the English, equally incapable of offering an insult as of submitting to one, had always looked on war as declared from

¹ A point in favour of Qamar-ud-din, who denied the whole story, is that the use of Hindustani seems improbable in such a context. But why should Chalmers invent it?

² Apart from the incursion into the Baramahal described on p. 166. Some of the horsemen engaged on this actually penetrated the Carnatic, and made a fleeting appearance near Madras!

³ *The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, p. 111.

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the moment he (Tipu) attacked their ally, the King of Travancore'.

It was Cornwallis's duty, however, to give proper thought to 'war aims'. Though what might be called the anti-imperialist party, led by Fox and Burke, was as vociferous as ever in the British Parliament, it was common ground between the Governor-General and Pitt's Cabinet that Tipu must be treated as an aggressor to be curbed. When hostilities began, indeed, Dundas at the Board of Control, was one of those who thought he should be flung from power for ever, though thereafter he vacillated until the tide of success turned decisively our way.

In the light of all this, a key document is the letter which the Governor-General-in-Council addressed to Medows on September 27th, 1790, when he still seemed to be heading for early victory; I have printed it as Appendix I. It reveals that in spite of Tipu's 'daring and restless ambition, . . . the superiority of his talents over the rest of the Princes of this country' and the 'mischievous purposes' to which those talents were constantly being applied, Cornwallis had already decided against deposing him and setting up the old family of the Rajas. Medows was authorised to grant an armistice, provided Tipu gave any one of the following in pledge—his own personal surrender, or the possession of Seringapatam, or his eldest son as a hostage, together with the possession of Bangalore. In addition to any of these there would have to be a substantial indemnity, and an essential preliminary to the whole would be the release of the English prisoners still held by Tipu.

Though we are already very much in the region of the final terms granted at Seringapatam, they clearly could not have been extorted otherwise than by military victory. However, when Tipu made an approach to Cornwallis in February 1791, and again after the fall of Bangalore, the reply merely mentioned reparations to all the members of the confederacy, and a similar answer was sent to De Fresne, Governor of Pondicherry, who at Tipu's request offered mediation.¹

Next, correspondence over the exchange of wounded after the battle of May 15th led to a suggestion by Tipu that he should send a confidential person to Cornwallis, but this time the answer was in stronger terms and included, for the first time, a reference

¹ Cornwallis to Colonel De Fresne, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, Appendix XLVII.

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to hostages. On May 24th, when the retreat to Bangalore had been decided upon, a conciliatory note creeps into the English letters, but the junction with the Marathas sharpens them up again! To a proposal from Tipu on May 27th, accompanied by a present of fruit (courteously declined), Cornwallis replied that he could only negotiate in co-operation with his allies. Thereafter Tipu persisted with individual approaches which seemed designed to split the Triple Alliance, whose members all took different views at different times on what sort of peace ought to be made, and when. One is driven to conclude that both Tipu and his adversaries, mistrustful as ever of each other's sincerity, believed in their hearts that only a military solution would be any good, and that when it came it would be in their own favour.¹

Doubtfully united on questions of peace, how did the battle line of the Triple Alliance appear while the Cauvery flood waters fell and the day of decision came closer? The Nizam had gained little credit from the siege of Gurramkonda. Thanks to the skill of Captain Andrew Read, now commanding the English detachment, the lower of its two forts was captured on November 7th. Soon afterwards a large army commanded by the Nizam's second son, Sikander Jah, came on the scene. Deciding that the upper fort was too strong to be stormed in a hurry, the prince moved off with Captain Read, intending to join Cornwallis for the march on Seringapatam. But he had only covered thirty miles when evil news followed him from Gurramkonda.

Tipu knew that some of his own relations were still in the fort; also, he particularly wanted to get his claws on the Nizam's general, Hafiz Farid-ud-din, whom Sikander Jah had left to blockade it.² So an expedition was daringly organised under Tipu's eldest son, Fath Haidar. He was not more than eighteen years of age, and it is rather touching that with him went Ghazi Khan, his father's preceptor and military guardian of thirty years

¹ For a précis of all these interchanges, including Tipu's abortive approaches to the Nizam and the Peshwa, see Mohibbul Hasan, pp. 252-7.

² Farid-ud-din was identified in Tipu's mind with the Nizam's rejection of his marriage offer in 1790. Tipu's relatives in the fort seem to have been on the Qamar-ud-din side of the family.

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earlier. Farid-ud-din, over-confident, advanced to meet them with a few cavalry and was quickly overwhelmed. Fath Haidar pressed on to Gurramkonda, the Mysoreans in the upper fort sallied out simultaneously and the forces of the Nizam fled in terror. Few escaped alive. Farid-ud-din was either killed in the cavalry action or murdered the next day, according to which of several versions one believes.

The end was a stalemate. Fath Haidar marched back to Seringapatam, Sikander Jah and Captain Read turned up again and celebrated Christmas Day 1791 by recapturing the lower fort, then off they went once more to join Cornwallis, and a state of blockade was continued until the end of the war.

As to the Marathas, when their combined armies met Cornwallis on his march from Kannambadi in May 1791, he held deep speech with their leaders—Haripant, the lordly old Brahmin of the venerable figure, pale skin, grey eyes and ‘countenance of Roman form’ (Dirom) and Parashuram Bhau, the active little black-eyed man of forty. As a result, Haripant stayed with the English army as Maratha plenipotentiary, while the forces of the Bhau marched away to occupy the Sira district and deny its rich resources to Tipu.

So far, well enough, though the Marathas committed frightful depredations wherever they went and failed to capture Chitaldrug, one of the most tremendous of all the ‘droogs’ and stoutly held for Tipu.

But once again, Bednur Province exerted its irresistible lure, and in December the Bhau began to move towards it. On the way he met a force nearly 8,000 strong commanded by Tipu’s cousin, Muhammad Raza (the Binky Nabob), and based on the town of Simoga. A jungle fight took place in which Captain Little’s detachment (still in faithful attendance on the Bhau) not only survived a critical situation but finally drove Muhammad Raza from the field and captured all his guns, horses, bullocks and baggage—everything except thirteen loaded elephants which were just got away.

Simoga fell (January 3rd) and a few days later the Bhau—regardless, as a year ago, of every promise to co-operate with Abercrombie, now climbing the Western Ghats once more—set out for Bednur city. He came close to it by the end of the month and was only dragged back into the arena by a final appeal from

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Haripant and Cornwallis via the Poona Government, coupled with rumours of the approach of Qamar-ud-din. He eventually arrived at Seringapatam on March 10th, four weeks after peace preliminaries had been signed.

On January 26th, 1792, the Grand Army left Bangalore for the fourth and last time, and took the northern route for Seringapatam. Passing under the precipices of now harmless Savandurga, they reached their concentration area near Huliurdurga, thirty-five miles west of Bangalore, on the evening of the 27th. Here a great review was staged. Cornwallis's strength had risen to just over 22,000 men—16,000 Indian and 6,000 English. Maxwell commanded the left wing, Stuart the right, Colonel Duff the artillery and Floyd the reserve. The Nizam's contingent consisted of about 18,000 horse, while Haripant's Marathas numbered 12,000. The evil days of Kannambadi must have seemed like a dream as Sikander Jah and Haripant, mounted on elephants, passed along the splendid array:

The troops all in new clothing, their arms and accoutrements bright and glittering in the sun, and themselves as well dressed as they could have been in time of peace; all order and silence, nothing heard or seen but the uniform sound and motion in presenting their arms, accompanied by the drums and music of the corps, chequered and separated by the parties of artillery extended at the drag-ropes of their guns.¹

Next day the march was resumed. It seemed probable that Tipu would dispute the passage of the Maddur river (a northern tributary of the Cauvery) and as the advance guard approached it they indeed saw troops of horse on the far side,² but nothing significant happened either then or during the rest of the advance. On February 5th the Grand Army came to its ground before Seringapatam, encamping four miles north of the city at French

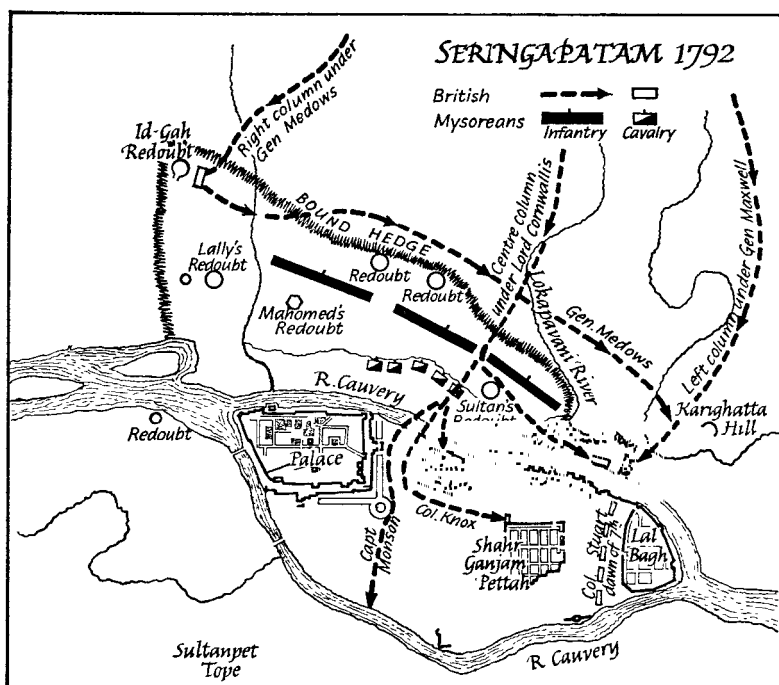
¹ Dirom, p. 121. He goes on to make a John Bullish contrast between the 'absurd state' of the potentates in their elephant howdahs and the soldierly appearance of Cornwallis and his staff on horseback.

² The news of their presence was, peculiarly enough, brought to the Commander-in-Chief by William Burke, kinsman of the great Edmund and Paymaster of the King's regiments. His appointment had been a 'job', a mere device so that he could make money, and Cornwallis took strongly against him on that account. But like so many civilians of the day, Burke loved a campaign and was out with the advance patrols whenever he got a chance.

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Rocks—so called because Lally cantoned there.

Tipu had in fact taken what turned out to be a fatal strategic decision. Misled by the events of the previous year, he believed that Cornwallis would not attack until he had been joined by Parashuram Bhau and by the Bombay Army (which was not expected for at least a fortnight), and that even then Seringapatam's defences were so formidable that the strength of the



MAP 2

English would ebb away while they prosecuted a difficult siege. But Cornwallis was a general who had learnt from his own experiences, just as he had from Meadows's. He had grasped the lesson of the direct route and the swift assault. The enemy was to be defeated before anything else could go wrong!

So far as defensive strength was concerned, Tipu's overconfidence can be understood. We may picture Seringapatam (Map 2) as an island keep with the two arms of the Cauvery as its moat and, for its outer bailey, Tipu's fortified camp on the

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north side of the river. The island itself, three and a half miles long from east to west and one and a half wide at the broadest point, was divided into three main sections—at the west end the old city, converted into a powerful fortress, bristling with guns, in the centre Tipu's new pettah of Shahr Ganjam, enclosed in a mud wall, and to the east the famous Lal Bagh gardens, also stoutly fortified. Between the citadel and Shahr Ganjam was a lesser garden called the Daulat Bagh, containing the Daria Daulat pavilion.

Under the guns of the Seringapatam batteries lay Tipu's camp. This was an oblong area about the same length as the island but not more than half a mile deep. It was protected to the east by those hills over which the battle of May 15th had been fought and was enclosed everywhere by a 'bound hedge' of bamboos and thorns. Further obstacles were various irrigation canals and the winding Lokapavani river; there were also seven fortified redoubts of which the most important were one on an *Id-gah*, or temple hill, at the north-west angle of the bound hedge, and three in the centre called respectively Lally's, Muhammad's and the Sultan's. Tipu's tent was near the latter. To defend the whole he had 40,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry and 100 guns, in addition to 300 mounted on the citadel, or in batteries along the island perimeter. The units which Cornwallis planned to deploy against this host were no more than 8,700 strong, but how much more difficult would have been the situation of the English had Tipu left a smaller garrison in Seringapatam and taken the field himself, with a mobile force, to operate against their rear!

Since Cornwallis was attacking from due north, he did not have to worry too much about the eastern range of hills;¹ his problem was to break through the bound hedge, penetrate Tipu's camp and cross the northern arm of the Cauvery so as to get a footing in the island, preferably at a point or points out of range of the citadel. The only bridge on that side had been broken down, so it would be a question of fording the river which, though some 250 yards wide, could at that season be waded in most places. There was a recognised ford at the eastern end, under the Lal Bagh gardens, and another much nearer the citadel.

¹ Apart from Karighatta Hill close to the river; although beyond the bound fence, it had been partially fortified and formed the eastern limit of Tipu's defences.

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The position was carefully reconnoitred on the morning of the 6th by various parties which included General Medows, Colonel Maxwell and Colonel Arthur Harris (destined to return to these scenes in 1799). The same afternoon there was a council of war, and at 5 p.m. Cornwallis issued orders which must have electrified the field officers chosen to receive them:

The army marches in three divisions at seven this evening to attack the enemy's camp and lines; picquets to join, field pieces, quarter and rear guards and camp guards to stand fast.

In other words, it was to be a musket-and-bayonet affair only—no guns. The orders continued with detailed arrangements. On the right General Medows, with 3,300 men, was to by-pass the Id-gah hill and attack Lally's Redoubt; in the centre Cornwallis himself, with Stuart as his second-in-command and a slightly stronger force, was to stab into the heart of Tipu's camp; and on the left Maxwell, with 1,700 men, had Karighatta Hill as his first objective. After that, the right and centre columns, if successful in driving the enemy before them, were to mingle with the fugitives making for the island, and gain a footing there if possible; Maxwell was to follow when he had seen the others safely across.

The three columns did not actually move off until 8.30, on a calm night with a full moon. I will take their proceedings in order, starting with Medows on the right.

RIGHT COLUMN. Medows's force got through the bound hedge without challenge. As already indicated, it was not supposed to attack the formidable Id-gah redoubt, which was outside the line of the advance. But being led very close to it by a native guide, Lieutenant-Colonel Nisbett at the head of the column decided to take a chance.¹ The garrison kept its nerve and a furious fight ensued, in which Saiyid Hamid, the Mysorean commander, was ably seconded by M. Vigie, with 360 men of Lally's corps. It was only at the second assault that the redoubt was taken. Four hundred Mysoreans lay dead, and among them was found the body of Saiyid Hamid.

¹ Wilks speaks of 'an ambiguity in the order'. The shrewd Captain Beatson, who was also near the head of the column, strongly urged a left turn (i.e. to support the centre). Ample information on all this, and much more about Beatson's interesting career, will be found under his entry in the *East India Military Calendar*.

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By the time all this was over, a momentary silence happened to fall over the battlefield. This might equally indicate defeat or victory, and Medows had to decide whether to press on towards the island or (as originally laid down) to move left to support Cornwallis's Centre Column. He decided on the latter, but losing his way among the paddy fields, marched right across Cornwallis's rear and, still looking for his Commander-in-Chief, ended up on Karighatta Hill at the opposite end of the line from where he started. So there was nothing for it but, imitating St. Paul, to cast four anchors out of the stern and wish for the day . . .

CENTRE COLUMN. This was organised into three divisions, with Lieutenant-Colonel Knox in front, Stuart in the centre and Cornwallis in reserve. Knox's first contact was with a small body of Tipu's men on a rocketeering expedition against the English camp; the horsemen escorting them galloped back at once and gave the alarm. In spite of an attack by the rocket men and some vicious musketry and artillery fire from Tipu's main forces, the vanguard of the Centre Column broke clean through to the river.

One party, consisting of elements of the 52nd, 71st, and 74th regiments, audaciously got across by the ford below the old city, and had the east gate of the latter not been closed that instant behind Tipu himself, Lieutenant Lindsay, rushing forward among the fugitives, might have ended the war the same night. As it was, the English party traversed the island to its south bank, and took post there, watching the main southern ford.

Next across, at more or less the same spot, was Colonel Knox with the light companies of the 71st and 74th. Disentangling himself from a swirling mass of Mysorean camp followers, tumbrils, bullocks etc., he turned left when on terra firma and made for Shahr Ganjam a mile away. He got into the pettah easily, the garrison having gone down to the riverside to man the batteries. Knox instantly sent three detachments to take them in the rear. The amazed gunners panicked and fled, and their cannon spoke no more.

A third party, led by Captain Hunter, forded the river near the Daulat Bagh gardens. But after a time, believing himself to be alone on the island and realising that the citadel guns could pulverise him at dawn, Hunter waded back and reported to Lord Cornwallis—at a fortunate moment, as we shall see.

The fortunes of the two remaining divisions of the Centre

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Column can be quickly described. Stuart's main objective was the Sultan's Redoubt. He had to fight his way through a mass of Tipu's cavalry to get there; but when attacked, the redoubt was found to be empty. Stuart then worked his way cautiously to the left with a large body of the infantry retreating before him, and he eventually came into contact with Maxwell's Left Column—at first each took the other for the enemy but luckily nobody fired.

The third division of the Centre Column was Cornwallis's own, and it had some of the toughest fighting. After everyone else had gone ahead and there was still two hours to daylight, it was attacked by a strong group of Mysoreans drawn from Tipu's centre and left. Inspired by their General's presence the mixed force of Europeans and Sepoys resisted stoutly, but it was fortunate that they had just been reinforced by Hunter's men. Cornwallis himself was slightly wounded in the hand—what a picture for Haripant and Sikander Jah who, told at midnight that the English had marched, were shocked to the heart by the idea of the Governor-General going out and fighting 'like a common soldier'!

As there was naturally no sign of Medows coming in from the right as arranged ('This will bring him if he is above ground!' exclaimed Cornwallis when the firing started), it was decided to move left towards the strong point of Karighatta Hill. And there at the foot, as dawn broke, they found to their astonishment Medows and his so-called Right Column, just about to move off. Cornwallis's first words were 'Good God, Beatson! Why did you lead the column against the Id-gah redoubt?' Beatson modestly passed on the blame, but the Commander-in-Chief's belief that a glorious opportunity had been lost was well-founded.

LEFT COLUMN. By the time Medows reached Karighatta, and of course long before Cornwallis did so, Maxwell had captured the hill without much difficulty and, after an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate Tipu's camp, had made his way to the river bank. Here he linked up with Stuart in an effort to get across to the extreme east end of the island. Stuart's Second-in-Command, Colonel Baird, paying a return visit to Seringapatam,¹ was the first over, but the depth of water at this point and the fire of the enemy's batteries made the whole exercise extremely hazardous. Just then however, Knox's reverse attack silenced the Mysorean guns. So

¹ His first, of course, was as a prisoner in 1780 (p. 47). His third would be with Harris in 1799.

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Stuart and Maxwell waded across, losing a good many men in the process, and joined Knox in the pettah. Stuart, as senior officer, now took command of the island forces.

Tipu himself does not seem to have played any direct part in the fighting. He had been just finishing his evening meal in his tent by the Sultan's Redoubt when news came of the English attack. He prepared to resist, but the sight of an enemy column already approaching the river told him that it was hopeless to try to organise a night battle on the north bank. He therefore scurried across to the old city, entering its eastern gate, as we have seen, only minutes ahead of Lieutenant Lindsay. Thereafter he controlled events as far as he could from a detached work at the north-east corner of the walls.

As day broke, however, the Mysorean leader was faced with a situation much favouring his enemies. He himself, it is true, was secure for the moment in his well-manned citadel, and on the north bank his troops still held some of the defences (including, it seems, Muhammad's and Lally's Redoubts), between the Sultan's Redoubt and the Id-gah. On the other hand, Stuart had been able to unite the English parties perilously scattered about the island, and could face with confidence any sally from the city against the pettah and the Lal Bagh gardens. Furthermore, Tipu's forces were much weakened by desertions as well as casualties; for example, the entire corps of *Ahmadis*, up to 10,000 strong, who had formed the centre of the Mysorean battle line, had faded away under cover of night, grabbed their women and children and vanished in the direction of their native Coorg. Many of the European technicians in Seringapatam had already skipped with agility to the winning side.

Tipu had now to consider where he could usefully counter-attack, and he chose—partly for prestige reasons perhaps—an assault on the Sultan's Redoubt, which had been so carelessly yielded early in the battle. It was strongly built, but faced of course away from the island, and Tipu would now be taking it in the rear. Moreover it was well within range of the citadel guns, which meant that any English force sent to relieve it would be exposed to unjustifiable risks.

In spite of all this, plus an almost total lack of water and (until they luckily found two loaded bullocks in a ditch) an inadequate stock of ammunition, the little garrison of about 150 under

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Captain Sibbald¹ put up a heroic defence against successive assaults—by Mysorean infantry, then by 2,000 cavalry (who dismounted at the last moment and tried to hack their way in with swords), and finally by Vigie's Europeans. It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon before the defenders, now down to less than 100, saw the last wave of assailants ebb away towards the island, and as night fell Tipu withdrew all his remaining forces from the north bank. He had in the meantime made an attempt to drive the English off the island, but without the slightest success.²

Cornwallis's Seringapatam campaign was now converted into a siege of the embattled city, for which he made preparations in form. The ring was not completely closed, however, for on February 8th a large body of Tipu's horse were able to slip away from their barracks on the south side of the Cauvery and follow the river bank down to Arikere, where they crossed. They then circled back outside the bound hedge and on the 11th made a bold raid against Cornwallis's headquarters, now on Karighatta Hill. Mackenzie's version is that they planned an attack on the artillery magazine, but Wilks had a circumstantial story of how a handful of them, inspired by that ever-fashionable stimulant *Cannabis sativa* (bhang), tried to find the Commander-in-Chief's tent in order to assassinate him, how they were diverted by chance to Colonel Duff's, and how they were eventually shot down before doing any damage. There had been a previous attempt on Cornwallis's life at the time of the siege of Bangalore (March 5th, 1791), but even now it was only reluctantly—for he hated 'buckram'—that he allowed his tent to be protected by a captain's guard.

Such escapades became less probable after the arrival of Abercrombie on the 16th. This general, forever doomed to an exhausting second-fiddle part in the grand symphony of Cornwallis's campaign, had had an even more arduous time than usual

¹ Sibbald, an artilleryman from Bengal, was killed in one of the early attacks. The redoubt was renamed in his honour. The command later devolved on Major Skelly.

² Total English casualties on the 6th and 7th, as carefully tabulated by Dirom, were 535 killed, wounded and missing. Of these, 343 were suffered by the Centre Column. He gives a rather absurd figure of 20,000 for the Mysorean losses, including a guess at desertions. Mohibbul Hasan quotes estimates of between 2,000 and 3,000 for Tipu's casualties in the normal sense. He also lost 80 guns; the total number captured by the confederates during the war was over 800—an indication of Tipu's strength in this arm.

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in getting his 6,000 troops and a brand-new siege train up the Western Ghats from Cannanore. He was in the Coorg country by late January, when he got an urgent call from Cornwallis to abandon—once again!—his heavy guns and hasten with lightened load to Seringapatam. Harassed at intervals by Mysorean cavalry under Fath Haidar, Abercrombie finally made contact with Floyd's brigade near the fatal ford of Kannambadi, and by the 19th his army was completing the investment of Tipu's citadel on its southern side. Other reinforcements were on the way. Realising at last the frustrated dreams of Humberstone, of Ross Lang, of Fullarton, of Musgrave and of Medows, Major Cuppage was about to lead British troops from Palghaut into Mysore by the Gajalhatti Pass!

But long before this happened, 'jaw' had begun to take over from 'war'. So we can leave the military operations simmering while we enter the rival commanders' tents, and listen to their councils.

Vakils and Hostages

ON January 12th, just a fortnight before the Grand Army marched out of Bangalore, Tipu had once more written to ask Cornwallis whether he might send a wakil to him. The reply, dispatched after a full-dress discussion between the allies, was 'Send hither the garrison of Coimbatore, and then we will listen to what you have to say'. There was a further exchange of letters in which Tipu denied that the Coimbatore capitulation terms had been violated, and Cornwallis insisted that they were. And so the matter was left, but on February 8th, when he saw that victory was impossible, Tipu sent for Chalmers, the hero of Coimbatore, and his comrade, Lieutenant Nash, and asked whether they would carry a letter to the English camp. They agreed, and took a few more Coimbatore Europeans with them. Though Cornwallis was still unhappy about the way the rest of the captured garrison was being treated, he agreed that peace talks could now start.

Five days later, therefore, began the long transaction which led to the end of open war between Tipu and the English, at least for the next seven years. The Mysorean delegates were Ghulam Ali Khan (he of the Constantinople Embassy) and Ali Raza Khan, a utility man of diplomacy and war since the 1760s. The English were represented by Sir John Kennaway,¹ their experienced envoy to the court of the Nizam, the latter by his leading Minister, Mir Alam, and the Marathas by Govind Rao Kale and Bachaji Mahendale, who had been their wakil with Medows. Commentaries on the peace talks abound, but the fullest and perhaps the most reliable account is Kennaway's own; it runs to five hundred and eighty-six folios of manuscript, with seventy-nine appendices in support.²

The conference fell into two parts—one brief (February

¹ Known as 'Captain Kennaway' until he received a baronetcy on Feb. 25th 1791. He had been A.D.C. to Cornwallis before being sent as envoy to the Nizam in 1788. His opposite number, Malet, at the Peshwa's Court, was made a baronet at the same time as Kennaway.

² Mackenzie Collection (General), No. 61, I.O.L.

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13th–23rd), while Tipu was working to soften the armistice terms presented to him at the first meeting, though he knew that he must broadly accept them if anything was to be saved from the wreck; the other, prolonged until March 17th, over the details of the Definitive Treaty.

Cornwallis's basic terms were:

1. A cession of territory producing three crores of rupees (£3 million) per annum.

2. A cash indemnity of eight crores.

3. The persons of two of Tipu's sons as hostages.

The vakils were alarmed by the stringency of these demands, which they assured Kennaway could not possibly be met, and a quick modification was offered them on February 17th, as follows:

1. Cession of half of Tipu's domain, being the parts adjacent to the allies' territories.

2. Indemnity of six crores.

3. All prisoners taken by Haidar Ali and his son to be released.

4. Two hostages, as before.

Kennaway was now adopting the line 'no more concessions', but the vakils somehow managed to prune the indemnity still further. So on the 23rd, in the principal mosque of Seringapatam, Tipu submitted to a great gathering of ministers and officers the terms of February 17th, with the second clause re-phrased as follows:

Three crores and 30 lakhs of rupees (i.e. 33 million rupees or £3,300,000) to be paid by Tipu either in gold coins or in bullion. Of this, one crore sixty-five lakhs to be handed over immediately, the rest by three instalments over periods not exceeding three months each.

Wilks, who knew personally many of those present in the mosque, says that though there were shades of opinion among them, they were unanimous that the army of Mysore had become disheartened and could no longer be relied upon. 'As a mere scene,' he adds, 'our settled abhorrence of the principal character cannot entirely extinguish the general impressions of sympathy . . . extending to some who were really deserving of compassion; impressions exaggerated perhaps in the author's mind by finding, in after times, that few of the members of that assembly could recite its events without tears'.¹

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 244.

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The next day hostilities ceased, and on the 26th the preliminaries, signed and sealed by Tipu Sultan, were delivered to Lord Cornwallis and the allies along with his sons, the hostage boys.

There had been considerable discussion as to which of Tipu's already numerous children these should be. At an early stage Cornwallis had assured the vakils, through Kennaway, that having only one son himself, he 'experienced the affection of a parent in more than an ordinary degree', but even that child could not be received by him with greater tenderness than would Tipu's. Instead of demanding two particular sons, he would accept any two of the three eldest. To this the vakils replied with some curious and, I suspect, carefully misleading information:

1. The oldest, Fath Haidar, was about fourteen years of age, was illegitimate and was extremely obnoxious to his father, and on that account he was averse to parting with him. [Fath Haidar was almost certainly eighteen and precious to his father (p. 172); if he was not, why should Tipu mind losing him?]

2. Abdul Khaliq was eight years of age and owing to a disease from his infancy was an object not fit to be taken from his apartments in the zenana. [Abdul Khaliq appears later as a well-bred, intelligent and reasonably healthy boy of about ten.]

3. The third, Muiz-ud-din, only four or five months younger than the second, was the favourite son and was considered by the Court to be Tipu's destined successor. However, his father was prepared to give him up, as this would be the best proof of his sincerity, and would afford the young man an opportunity of knowing and being known to the principal personages of the three States. [The most artful false trail of all, since the heir-apparent and perhaps Tipu's only legitimate son was another boy, called Muin-ud-din. Though the latter was the second or third son in point of age (p. 209) his very existence seems to have been concealed by the vakils, and if Tipu, helped by the aural similarity in names, was in fact palming off Muiz-ud-din as his heir, I can only say that he had a complete success with the English delegates, with Cornwallis himself, and with the contemporary chroniclers.]

4. The three younger sons were still at their nurses' breasts and were out of the question.

In the end, however, it was Abdul Khaliq and Muiz-ud-din (Plate 10) who left the citadel for Cornwallis's camp at noon on February 26th. The ensuing scene has been described by a

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dozen contemporary pens, but was put even more strikingly on canvas by artists of every degree, from the near-great to the print-sellers' hacks (Appendix IV). Indeed, (if a personal note may be excused), it was the attentive study of the largest, if not the most inspired of these works, Mather Brown's 'Earl Cornwallis receiving the Sons of Tipoo Sahib as Hostages', now hanging in the Oriental Club, London (Plate 11), which first set the present writer thinking about Tipu as a subject for biography.

The hostages had in fact been expected two days before. The delay, as Cornwallis wrote to Sir Charles Oakeley¹ on the 26th, arose not from any difficulty over the Treaty, but from the distress caused by the boys leaving the zenana and Tipu's anxiety that they should be properly received. The scene, when they set out from the tents which had been prepared for them between the two armies, was truly one to rouse the fancy of European artists at a time when 'oriental romance' was about to seduce the western world. The procession, as described by Dirom, was led by several camel hircarrahs² followed by seven standard-bearers carrying small green flags suspended from rockets, and one hundred pikemen with spears inlaid with silver. Then came the princes, each mounted on an elephant caparisoned with a silver howdah, while other elephants carried Tipu's vakils. A battalion of Bengal Sepoys formed a guard of honour and as the boys dismounted at the door of his tent Lord Cornwallis took each by the hand, led them inside, and sat them down on the right and left of his chair.

Ghulam Ali acted as spokesman. 'These children were this morning the sons of the Sultan my master,' he said. 'Their situation is now changed, and they must look up to your Lordship as their father.' This, of course, drew a paternal response from the large, good-humoured Englishman, whereupon, as Dirom puts it:

Their little faces brightened up; the scene became highly interesting; and not only their attendants but all the spectators

¹ A former Member of Council, Madras, who had gone back to England in 1789 after twenty-two years in India. In April 1790 he was offered and accepted the Governorship of Madras in succession to Medows who, it was assumed, would be taking over the Governor-Generalship from Cornwallis when the latter sailed for England in January 1791. By the time Oakeley reached Madras, Medows was commanding in the field, so Oakeley acted as Second in Council, looking after civil affairs until Medows finally retired in March 1792.

² Mounted messengers. The word was also used for spies or informants.

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were delighted to see that any fears they might have harboured were removed, and that they would soon be reconciled to their change of situation and to their new friends.

The bearing and intelligence of the boys made a great impression—it was easy to see that they had been ‘bred up from their infancy with infinite care’ and instructed to ‘imitate the reserve and politeness of age’. They must indeed have been an engaging sight, in their long white muslin gowns, with rows of large pearls round their necks and more jewels in their red turbans. Abdul Khaliq is usually described as of a ‘rather dark and murky complexion’, with flattish features and a long, thoughtful countenance which became more animated as time went on; the onlookers were more taken by the small, round face and fair colouring of Muiz-ud-din—‘the sweetest countenance I have ever seen to belong to a native of Hindustan’, gushed a correspondent of *The Calcutta Gazette* (March 29th), ‘his profile is perfectly Grecian’.

After some formal talk, the Governor-General presented each hostage with a gold watch, there was a distribution of betel and attar of roses, and back the lads climbed onto their elephants, for the return procession to their tents. There the next day, within the canvas enclosure of ‘a beautiful sea-green colour’ which formed Tipu’s headquarters in the field, Cornwallis and the other allies paid a return call. They were ushered into a tent of fine chintz and, as always, the English observers were struck not only by the ‘state, order and magnificence’ prevailing, but by the high discipline of the Mysorean guard—a great contrast to the ‘rabble of infantry’ surrounding most of the Indian courts they knew. This time there was an exchange of gifts—a sword for Cornwallis and firearms for the boys—while Ghulam Ali cracked incomprehensible jokes in Persian and Muiz-ud-din improved the occasion by reciting a poem of Hafiz and a chapter from the Koran.

All this is well, and one can perhaps excuse the author of a fantastic ‘puff’, issued with Orme’s print of the Mather Brown picture, when he spreads himself about ‘the gallant Cornwallis, displaying to his captives a generosity which would have done honour to the brightest hero of the classic page of antiquity . . . the amiable Princes looking up to that exalted character as their only Protector, Father and Friend . . . the Vakeel, their preceptor with all the splendour of Asian magnificence, and with a dignity,

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approaching the apostolical character...'. An event, in fact, 'combining in one point of view the most splendid objects and scenery which could attract the human eye and the most pathetic incidents which could ever warm the human heart'.

Yet this chronicler and everyone else seem quite unconscious that what the allies had done was to seize two small children with the intention of keeping them prisoners until their father had fulfilled every tittle of a Treaty which had not as yet been completely agreed and would certainly take years to liquidate. They were actually detained until May 29th 1794—not so warming to the human heart. Dirom, of course, errs in stating that Muiz-uddin was the son of Tipu's wife Ruqayya Banu, who had died of shock during the siege, 'a melancholy event which made the situation of the younger boy doubly interesting'; nevertheless Cornwallis's fatherly gestures and the princes' subsequent triumphs as the social 'lions' of Madras cannot acquit our ancestors of making a sentimental meal out of an act of state which seems to belong more to mediaeval banditry than to the Age of Reason.

The whole episode is important as giving the measure of the fear and detestation in which Tipu had come to be held; how far this feeling was justified or whether, as 'liberal' writers like James Mill¹ thought, it was tinged with hysteria, is something on which I hope this study will gradually throw light.

That to Cornwallis, for all his benevolence, a hostage was a hostage soon became apparent. The negotiation of the 'definitive treaty' ran into trouble. After Tipu had shown his *bona fides* by handing over the first instalment, or 'kist', of the indemnity (one crore, 9½ lakhs of rupees), the delegates got down to deciding exactly what was meant by 'one half of the kingdom' of Mysore. The division was to be by revenue, not by square mileage, so an intricate examination of financial returns was involved. Kennaway and his colleagues thought that Tipu's vakils were deliberately understating the value of his inner territories, which the allies could not possibly claim, and exaggerating that of the frontier provinces, so that an undue proportion of the latter would have to be included in Tipu's half. They also suspected that, pursuing this pardonable aim, he had concealed or made away with the revenue papers of several districts. Who indeed was to say whether the classic excuse, 'lost in the blitz', was true or false

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 457.

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when applied to the *kutchery* files of Darwar, Coimbatore, or Bednur? Even the values of Tipu's coinage and the length of his month (the economical ruler of Mysore paid his servants on a month of forty days) contributed to the confusion and delay.

So at last, on March 9th, Kennaway sent the vakils a draft Treaty of his own devising. They did not like it, but finding that Kennaway was firm, passed it on to their master as it stood.

While there were several territories listed as 'adjacent' to the allies' possessions, on which there was scope for argument, it was when Tipu found that Coorg had been added to the English quota that he fairly exploded. Wilks's paraphrase may well be too mild:

To which of the English possessions (he asked) is Coorg adjacent? Why do they not ask for the key of Seringapatam? They know that I would have sooner died in the breach than consent to such a cession, and durst not bring it forward until they had treacherously obtained possession of my children and my treasure.¹

Tipu had a case, but not a cast-iron one. The people of Coorg had never submitted to the suzerainty of Mysore, except under repeated duress. Recently the young raja, long a state prisoner of Tipu, had regained his freedom, and through all the vicissitudes of Abercrombie's attempts to join Cornwallis, had shown himself a sturdy and self-reliant ally of the English. When Tipu made a last-minute conciliatory approach (May 26th, 1791) his reply had point and wit:

You now ask for my friendship, to which I answer I have pledged my word to the English, with whom I am in alliance. They have locked it up in a box and sent it to Europe. How can I therefore give my word to you when [until] the English choose to restore it to me again?

As to the adjacency argument, Coorg certainly had no common frontier with any existing English territory, but it did adjoin a part of Malabar which, as had already been agreed, the Company was to take over, and *that* was adjacent to nothing except the tiny trading station of Tellicherry. The truth is almost certainly that Coorg had been omitted from the earlier schedules by inadvertence, and that it was Abercrombie who said the necessary word in Cornwallis's ear.

So now there was a crux. The allies were convinced that Tipu

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 245-6.

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had spun out the parleys deliberately, while he strengthened (under their very noses) the defences of his citadel, while Qamar-ud-din slipped through to join him, and while disease and forage problems were having their only too familiar effect on the besieging armies. A few weeks hence, and a renewed conflict might by no means favour the allies. So on March 14th Cornwallis took stern steps. Parashuram Bhau, who had at last appeared on the scene, was unleashed upon the country south of Seringapatam, the hostage Princes, deprived of their Mysorean guards, were ordered to get ready to leave for the Carnatic,¹ and Tipu was told that the siege would be renewed unless he accepted the allies' terms at once. Who, if anyone, was bluffing whom, is a nice question, but Tipu found in the possible danger to his sons a sufficient reason for swallowing the Definitive Treaty, under protest.

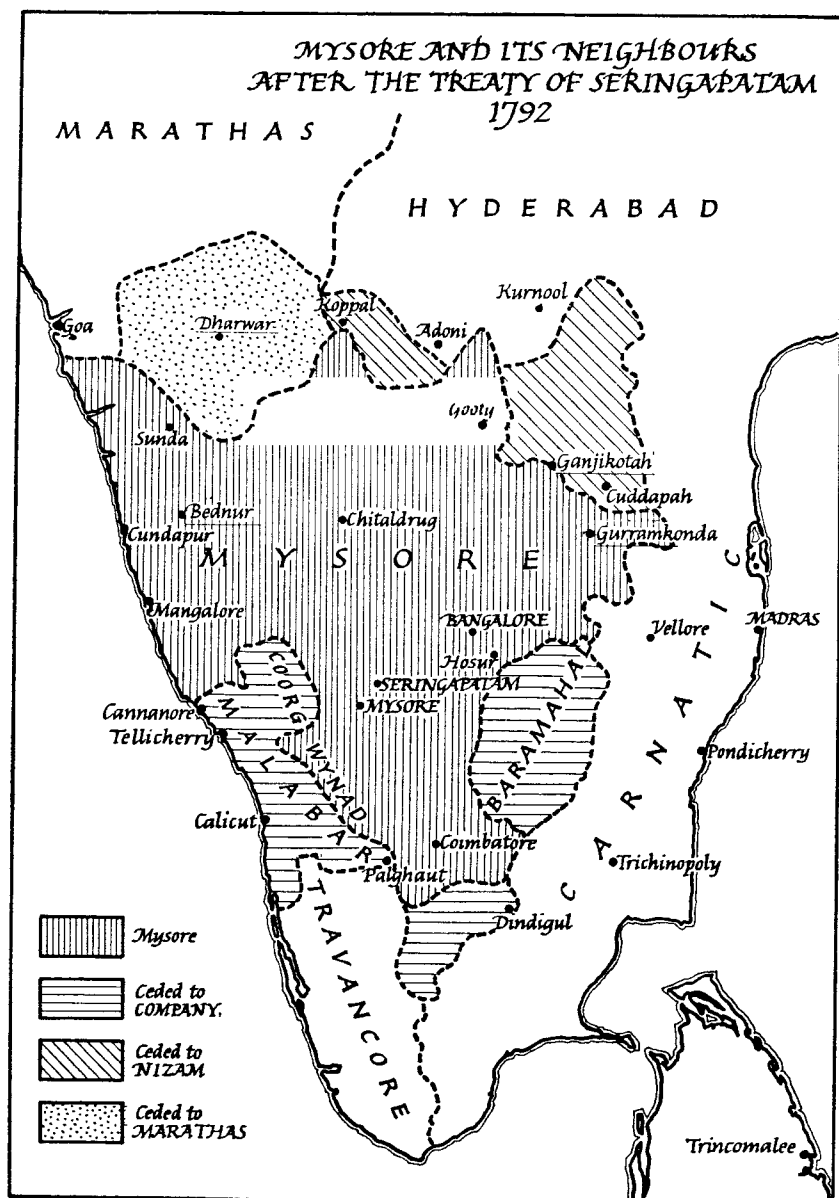
The document was to be delivered to Cornwallis by Abdul Khaliq and Muiz-ud-din, and on March 19th a ceremony more or less repeating their first interview with the Governor-General took place. But there was a nuance, and we are indebted to Theodore Hook's *Life of Sir David Baird* for the fullest record of it. The elder boy, he says,² handed the document to His Lordship with his accustomed ease and grace,

but when he was told that he must deliver the other two copies to the Vakeels of the other Native Powers, his manner assumed an air of constraint and dissatisfaction. One of the Vakeels who received the Treaty (for neither the Nizam's son nor Hurry Punt thought it consistent with their dignity to appear in person) muttered something as he took it from the Prince, who without giving him time to explain himself, told him 'that they might as well be silent, for certainly their masters had nothing to complain about'. This remonstrance, indicative of the boy's manliness and spirit, made a powerful impression on the bystanders.

The vakil so addressed was one of the Marathas, and Abdul Khaliq had made a shrewd remark, as a glance at Map 3 will show.

¹ According to Dirom, they were actually put into palanquins and taken a short distance down the Bangalore road under the escort of Captain Welch's battalion. They were then allowed to encamp while their father's answer was awaited. Kennaway says that before daybreak on the 14th, Ali Raza came to his sleeping tent and told him that if the boys were sent off in the manner proposed, the lives of both himself and the other vakils would be in danger.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 103.



MAP 3

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The total revenue of Tipu's dominions had eventually been agreed at close on twenty-four million rupees, and by the formula of equal division of the allies' moiety, each of them received territory worth four million rupees per annum. Thus in return for services to the alliance which were rather more than off-set by disservices, the Marathas regained the whole of the territory 'between the rivers' over which they and Tipu had marched and fought so often. The Nizam, an even more modest contributor to victory, resumed not only the whole Ganjikotah Cuddapah country, but a substantial tract on both banks of the Tungabhadra, further west. Dharwar was, of course, included in the Marathas' slice and Kioppal in the Nizam's, but the former did not get Parashuram Bhau's dream city, Bednur, nor the latter Gurramkonda.

As for the English, though it can fairly be said that in terms of lives, rupees and undefeatable hard slog they had earned much more than their agreed third, what they did receive was of great commercial as well as strategic value. To have suzerainty over spice-bearing Malabar from north of Cannanore to south of the Ponnani River, with Coorg as its defensive hinterland, promised them supremacy in the West Coast trade, while their control of Dindigul and the Baramahal at last made the Carnatic almost invasion-proof. Moreover, with indispensable Palghat also in English hands, there was very little menace from Tipu's retention of Coimbatore.

Mohibbul Hasan¹ reminds us that there was one person who got nothing out of the carve-up. This was the Raja of Travancore, for whose sake the allies ostensibly had gone to war. He was not even mentioned in the Treaty, but had to continue paying more than half his revenue to the English in return for military protection. It was not until 1796 that he got back three small districts which Tipu had ceded to the English but which the Raja claimed were his.

It now only remained for the allies to take leave of each other, and by the first week in April their great host was thankfully on the march from its malodorous camp before Seringapatam. The formal farewells were said near Cornwallis's old concentration area at Huliurdurga, and then each army went its separate way. It was perhaps rough justice that the Marathas' route took them

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 268-9.

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through country which Parashuram Bhau had reduced to a desert, so they had a miserable march of it.

On the whole, the parting was without regrets. It had never been an alliance of hearts or even of minds—merely a fragile three-sided structure which jealousy and suspicion were constantly undermining, but which expediency just managed to prop up. One common thought certainly emerged, that whatever their public professions, none of the partners was in favour of the total extirpation of Tipu's power, because each regarded him as a possible future counterweight to the others! We have already noted the English point of view in Cornwallis's letter to Medows of September 27th, 1790; for the reasoning behind it we must go to the politic Malet. Writing to Cornwallis seven months earlier,¹ he had remarked that while the ejection of Tipu would mean finding another authority to put in his place, it would have the much worse effect of involving the English in 'an intricate and almost inextricable labyrinth of controversy and altercation' with the Marathas, and probably the Nizam also, over the division of such enormous spoils. It is quite true that in 1799 Wellesley was to cut this knot by restoring the ancient ruling house of Mysore, under English overlordship. But he had no 'labyrinth of controversy' to struggle with, partly because of the immense prestige which his office and his personality carried by then, but chiefly because in the second Seringapatam campaign the Marathas were not involved at all and the Nizam took only a subsidiary role.

This is the true reply to those who, like Dundas at the time and many patriotic British historians since, felt that Cornwallis had thrown away a great chance of ridding South India of its most disruptive element and had rendered inevitable a Fourth Anglo-Mysore War.

Even as it was, implementation of the Treaty brought plenty of vexations, though of a minor kind. On the key point, however—the punctual payment of instalments on his heavy indemnity—Tipu stuck faithfully to the time-table. No doubt he was thinking of those boys of his, down in Madras. They had in fact been taken there at his special request—the original plan had been to instal them in comparative isolation at Vellore. However, two houses

¹ Feb. 5th, 1790 (*The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, pp. 64-7).

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were rented (one in the Fort and the other in the Choultry district of Madras) for them and for Ghulam Ali Khan and Ali Raza Khan, who were to continue to act as vakils, and their engagement book began to fill. They began by calling on old Muhammad Ali. At first sight it is a little surprising that Tipu seemed more pleased than otherwise by this courtesy to the most inveterate enemy of his house; the reason only became apparent after the fall of Seringapatam in 1799. Magnificent presents were exchanged, including five beautiful Arab horses for the boys.

Then on June 21st Lady Oakeley, with a bandeau inscribed CORNWALLIS round her head, gave a ball in honour of the victorious Governor-General. The hostages were present, of course, and when the dancing started 'these extraordinary guests', as the *Courier* called them, sat on each side of her. They were evidently in good spirits; the minuets proved 'of too grave a cast' for them, but they thought a cotillon and a strathspey great fun, and Abdul Khaliq got a laugh by enquiring which was Lord Cornwallis's dancing wife.

Much of the boys' time must have been spent sitting for their portraits, judging by the number which have survived, either in close-up (Plate 10) or as part of more ambitious compositions. Arthur Devis¹ has left a pleasant description of working on one of the latter. Both the Princes and their attendants, he says, were delighted to see themselves on canvas and 'wrote frequently to the Sultan' to report progress. The boys never tired of dressing up in 'the habits and ornaments they wore on the memorable day when they quitted the Palace of their father'; 'the youngest', adds Devis, 'was particularly anxious to have his ear-ring painted—he wore but one, which he received as a present from his mother'.

By August it was time for a little return of hospitality, and on the 16th the *Courier* described the occasion with some archness:

Yesterday the young Princes and the Vakeels gave a dinner *à la Seringapatam* to Sir Charles and Lady Oakeley and several ladies and gentlemen. Pelaws, Curries, Kabobs, Fruits etc. abounded, and we are told that but for the appearance of Female Charms and some bottles on the tables containing a liquid of a Vinous Semblance, the Fete would have been completely *musselmanny*.

¹ See Appendix IV, p. 348.

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If the whole thing was an exciting interlude for the two small boys, the vakils must have found their status as guests of honour in their enemies' Provincial capital somewhat bewildering. But Ghulam Ali at least, the diplomatic veteran of Constantinople, turned everything to account. On Christmas Day, when the Lord Mayor's Court goes to church in procession, there he is in the Corporation pew, doing his best to follow the sermon of the Rev. Mr. Millingchamp and, as is his habit, 'observing the manners and customs of the nations among whom he resides'. A man of liberal and highly cultivated mind, is the *Courier's* verdict, and it reflects that:

The attention which is shown him cannot fail to make a very favourable impression of the disposition of the English towards him and the young Princes who are under his care and, no doubt, must prove very grateful to the Sultaun, his master.

How are we to read all this? What has happened to the image of Tipu Sultan, the blood-drinking Tiger of Mysore? An earlier episode is at first sight even more contradictory. Turning over the India Office Library file of the *Courier*, my eye was caught by a glaring mass of capitals and italics, boldly displayed in its issue for March 15th 1792. It was nothing less than a hysterical apology for some lines 'Addressed to Tippoo Sultan' which had appeared in the previous number. The only Shadow of Excuse, the Editor exclaims, for so gross a violation of all Decorum and Propriety is that the COMPOSITOR WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE EDITOR caused it to be inserted in the paper during his temporary absence. The UNFORTUNATE PRINCE who was at that moment honourably FULFILLING a TREATY with us, and who was the immediate Object as much of mistaken Poetry as of mistaken Sense, might not be within range of it but, says the Editor, his voice rising almost to a scream,

it is the PUBLIC who always feels generously, the ARMY and its NOBLE LEADER, with whom Tippoo Sultan has bravely contended—the Nation which at this Instant holds TWO of his OFFSPRING a Pledge of that Faith the just fulfillment of which has never once been doubted—that the Editor feels are wounded by this Insult to the SULTAN.

What then can an individual, however unintentionally placed in such a Predicament as the EDITOR is, have to offer for such an

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Access of Injury? *All he can offer* is what he now begs leave to do by everything that can be conceived under the word APOLOGY for such a Lapse, under such Circumstances and upon such a Subject.

Whew! Back in haste to the previous week's issue to discover just how unforgiveable the outrage on the Sultan was. Frustration — only one sheet of the little four-page journal was in the file; the other, containing the poem, had been torn out! Censorship by the Editor, maybe, before the copy destined for East India House ever left Madras? Luckily an application to Colindale revealed that the British Museum Newspaper Room harbours an untampered-with copy of the *Madras Courier* for March 8th, 1792. What I found there was indeed a fairly strong dose of invective and of triumph o'er the fallen foe, but expressed in numb clichés that have done duty on a thousand such occasions before and since. 'Where now, fell Tyrant is thy boasted Power?' is the predictable opening, and in due course we meet 'the flattering mercenary crowd', 'the glaring Purple of thy Crimes', 'the generous Briton' with his 'conquering Sword', and many other obliging hack. Maybe it *was* a bit fierce to accuse Tipu of poisoning his prisoners wholesale, at least that is what one reads into:

Thy savage Disposition but impell'd
To crimes of deepest Dye — The baleful Drug
Raged in the Veins of our heroic Youth
A prelude short to Madness and to Death.
Say, recreant Monster, did thy Coward Soul
Of shackled Virtue feel a secret Dread
That, daring not to lift the murderous Blade,
Thou like a Thief, by night's dark Curtain veil'd,
Did steal their precious Lives?

But the poet ('A. FERINGY', he signs himself) finishes on such a strictly conventional note that his shafts are somehow blunted:

The Benefits of Heaven have been abus'd,
Now take thy Just Reward — Defeat and Shame,
The stings of guilty Conscience, and the Taunts
Of such as lately trembl'd at thy Nod;
Whilst (Death to all thy Hopes), the Victor Tribe,
Thy Troops dispers'd, thy Capital subdu'd,
With three exulting volleys rend the sky.

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In truth there is little here that the ordinary patriotic Briton of that day would not defend as the small change of self-congratulation. Why then the gibbering apology? There is a possible explanation which, if correct, tells us a good deal about the English view of Tipu. In 1788 the editorship of the *Courier* was taken over by Hugh Boyd. He had been a member of Burke's circle in London and had come out to Madras as a Private Secretary to Macartney, who personally insinuated him into the editorial chair. He also obtained the typically 'Burke' appointment of Deputy-Paymaster to the King's Troops—an even less justifiable job than that of his boss, William! In spite of this and other cosy sinecures, he was always hard up—Dodwell compares him to one of Lamb's Great Men, who 'lay all the rest of mankind under contribution'. Politically, of course, Boyd would be anti-Company, if not avowedly pro-Tipu, and though he seems to have given up the editorship some eight months before the affair of the poem,¹ his Whiggish hand can surely be seen in the background.

It has perhaps been worth devoting a page or two to this episode, because it reminds us again of the *political* clue to so much that seems confused in the contemporary reaction to Tipu and his like. On the non-political side, there was the familiar impulse to hate your enemy as long as you did not get too close to him—to believe the French monsters, if not cannibals, but to slip over to Paris for a holiday whenever you got the chance—to tremble (whether with fear or rage) at the name of Tipu, but to make drawing-room pets of his children. By contrast, in the *public* life of the late eighteenth century, Party—inveterate Party—was the mainspring of thought and action, and it is useless to weigh what a man of 1792 said about Tipu Sultan until you know how he felt about William Pitt and Charles James Fox.

For the rest of his term of office, Cornwallis was deeply engaged upon those legal and land revenue reforms with which his name is almost as much associated as with the Seringapatam campaign

¹ An unsigned letter to the Court of Governors dated Madras, July 15th, 1791, claims that the papers 'are more accurate than they were formerly . . . We have been some restraint on Boyd; he has now resigned the editorship and Hall has taken it' (Home Misc. 251, I.O.R.). J. S. Hall was a barrister.

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—though not always so happily. He continued to correspond fairly voluminously with Tipu Sultan, but Mysore was no longer at the centre of his mind. His longed-for return to England did not take place until October 1793, having been further delayed by the news (received on July 11th) that France had declared war on England and Holland four months before, and by the consequent decision to attack Pondicherry.

Anxious that this operation should go without a hitch, Cornwallis left Calcutta for Madras early in August. But by the time he arrived he found his old comrade-in-arms, Colonel Floyd, from the land side, and his brother, Commodore Cornwallis, from the sea, had settled the business. He did not go back to Calcutta, however, but stayed quietly at Madras, waiting for the *Swallow* packet to carry him to England.

Just a year before (August 1792) there had been a fresh decision on the question of his successor. The man of destiny was no longer General Medows. While in camp at Seringapatam he had written to the Court of Directors indicating that he wished to come home as soon as possible, rather than wait for Cornwallis's shoes. But even if he had not done so, the event which followed immediately brought his judgement and even his mental stability into question, and would certainly have queered his chances. On the day that the peace talks with Tipu's vakils opened, he tried to shoot himself.

For decades, the printed documentation of the affair was poor—neither Dirom nor Mackenzie nor Wilks breathed a word—and it was not until Kaye published his *Life of Cornwallis* (first contributed to *Good Words* in 1865¹) that the matter became generally known; even today some writers like C. H. Rao seem to cast a doubt upon it.

However, there has survived in the records of the East India Company an autograph letter (Home Misc. 251 I.O.R./655) whose frail yellow sheets and tiny writing contain the whole story. It is from Captain Alexander Brown, 1st Coast Sepoys, to William

¹ It was later reprinted as one of his *Lives of the Indian Officers* (London, A. Strachan, 2 vols., 1867). Surprisingly, Kirmani is quite useful here, though one may discount his first-person report of Lord Cornwallis's little speech, explaining to Medows that though it would be easy to capture the fortress, and Tipu with it, the problem of their confederates, 'who are sharers with us in everything', made peace at the moment the best policy (*Tipu Sultan*, pp. 218-19).

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Balfour, Fort St. George. Dating proudly from 'Center Redoubt, near Seringapatam, March 11, 1792', Captain Brown begins with an excellent description of the first visit of the hostage Princes,¹ then goes on to the event which had cast a gloom over them all. According to him, Medows had allowed his error on the night of February 6th to prey unreasonably on his mind. Lord Cornwallis, doing all he could to solace and encourage him, agreed that he should be given the chance to wipe away what he regarded as a stain by leading the final storm of Seringapatam.

This cheered the general up, but with the announcement of preliminary peace talks, he declared he would go straight back to Europe, starting on March 1st. When he visited the headquarters tent on February 26th he seemed in high good humour and Cornwallis sent him off to 'make himself fine to receive the young men'. But by the time he got back to his own quarters his griefs returned, and he decided to blow his brains out. Luckily the pistol went off prematurely and wounded him 'between the breast-bone and the navel'. He was at once disarmed, but quietly said he would obey the doctor's orders and would not try to 'tear open his wounds'. By February 29th, according to Malet (who sent George Dick, at Poona, two brief and guarded notes² on the subject) he was well on the way to recovery in mind and body.

When Cornwallis wrote to Dundas on March 4th, he characteristically said nothing about the incident. He simply reported that Medows would be proceeding to Madras directly his health permitted, praised his 'generous and noble' conduct in everything, and urged that he should be shown all attentions, at Court and elsewhere.

An enigmatic figure, Major-General William Medows. Colonel Deare, that jealous Company's officer, gives a scathing first impression of him as 'a trifling, insignificant character', without dignity, capacity or the power of exertion—'he will study for hours for a *bon mot*, or how to put off and put on his hat to the best advantage...' Malet talks of his 'sense of honour too

¹ A detail only he records is that immediately the hostages received their gold watches, 'light-footed domestics' carried the news to the Fort. With well-bred indifference the boys handed the gifts over to their attendants, but once in the elephant howdahs for the return journey, were seen examining them delightedly.

² *The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, pp. 583-4.

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refined and too highly strained to submit to the common errors and disappointments incidental to our nature'. But we have seen what a leader of men he was when the hurricane blew, and the fact that Cornwallis loved and valued him will be good enough for most of us.¹

Personalities apart, however, there was an over-riding argument against Medows or any other soldier succeeding to the Governor-Generalship. This was that the immediate problems of British India were economic and social, not (it was fervently hoped) military. Cornwallis's reforms had still to be implemented, so who better to carry them through than Sir John Shore, his right-hand man at the Board of Revenue? And thus, with Oakeley already installed at Madras and Abercrombie about to give way to a Bengal Civil Servant, Jonathan Duncan, at Bombay, the brief reign of the soldier-Governors came to an end.

It had been Cornwallis's hope that his final act before leaving India would be to return the hostage Princes to their father—even to accompany them part of the way to Mysore. But a tiresome dispute over some villages being claimed by the Nizam delayed the full implementation of the Treaty of Seringapatam, so it was left to Shore to take the final steps.

Apart from any natural 'end of term' feelings, one may suspect that by now the boys must have been finding their social obligations tedious. Whatever taste they may have formed for Handel's music, for example, it seems rather oppressive that during the last few weeks of their stay in Madras they had to attend *two* performances of selections from 'Messiah', 'Judas Maccabeus' and 'Esther'—the first early in January 1794, and a repeat on February 10th, when a female choir 'swelled the choral harmony' with fine effect.²

At last, February 27th, they set off, escorted by the faithful vakils and by Captain Doveton, representing the Governor-General. On March 17th they ascended the Ghats. Tipu, who had

¹ Cornwallis's affection for Medows only intensified his occasional anxiety over what he regarded as his levity and unwisdom. Some of his letters expressing this during the Southern campaign are very moving. See *Letter Book* (Correspondence with General Medows) P.R.O. 30/11/174. Medows's later career certainly did not suffer. He was promoted to full General in January 1798, and for a short period succeeded Cornwallis as Commander-in-Chief in Ireland (1801).

² *Madras Courier*, April 11th, 1794.

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been on circuit for two or three months, was now encamped with a small army at his birthplace, Devanhalli, and there on the 29th the family reunion took place. In silence the boys placed their heads on their father's feet and he, leaning forward, touched their necks.

Tipu, we are told, received Captain Doveton very graciously. He spoke highly of Lord Cornwallis, reprehended the behaviour of the French in murdering their King, expressed the opinion that they deserved every misfortune that had befallen them, and finished by announcing how much he admired the excellence of the English constitution.

A thought-provoking theme with which to bring the story of the boy hostages to a close.

Cornwallis's ship, the *Swallow*, cast anchor in Tor Bay on February 3rd, 1794. With fingers so cold that he could scarcely write, he hastened to inform Dundas that he was home, and that when he left Madras on October 10th, 'our affairs in India were in the most prosperous state'. It had indeed been a great Governor-Generalship. Though Cornwallis may have been misguided in some points of policy, such as his famous 'Perpetual Settlement' of the land revenues of Bengal, he had set a standard of justice, disinterested government and rigid personal integrity from which there could be no going back. As a soldier, he had escaped at last from the shadow of Yorktown. In Fortescue's view,¹ indeed, his 'nerve, audacity and swiftness in action' entitle him to a high place among commanders, while his character ensured the confidence of the armies. It was typical of him that he insisted on his share of the prize-money of the campaign (£6,148) being given to the troops, nor did he draw the £47,244 gratuity to which he was entitled under a scheme put forward by himself and adopted by the Company. Medows followed his example. They did not, however, refuse the honours offered by the King—a Marquessate (of the United Kingdom, be it noted) for Cornwallis, and a 'red ribbon' (K.C.B.) for his Second-in-Command. Abercrombie received the same distinction.

Cornwallis's salary as Governor-General had been £25,000 a

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 599.

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year, plus £6,000 as Commander-in-Chief, but he never drew the latter, even when on active service. He reckoned indeed that the fifteen months' campaigning cost him £30,000. His bitterness was justifiable, therefore, when he read of Lord Porchester's accusation in the House of Commons that he had entered into the war out of avarice! Cornwallis had the nation and the majority of Members behind him, but this did not, of course, restrain 'Tippoo's Vakeels' (as Lord Sydney called them) on the Opposition benches from attacking every aspect of the war, which most of them, diverging from Lord Porchester, affected to believe had been plotted by the Board of Control in a spirit of aggrandisement. In fairness to such critics, the American disasters had left a deep wound, and though, as Lieutenant-General Grant wrote to Cornwallis (March 3rd, 1791), Tipu might not have such 'powerful and numerous supporters as Jonathan had', it was understandable that 'if the devil were to appear in the form of an Asiatick prince, and disturb the peace and quiet of the British Government, he would find some friends in this country'.

And so Charles Cornwallis passed for a time from the Indian stage—to reappear briefly and unhappily eleven years later.¹ He left behind him a successor, John Shore, of a different stamp from himself, but no less honourable and well-intentioned; a British India larger and stronger and immeasurably better administered for his coming; a great opponent weakened but by no means crushed; and the memory of a campaign whose trials and triumphs were signalised by the bones of twenty-five thousand bullocks, which still whitened the hillsides between Bangalore and Seringapatam when Dr. Buchanan passed that way in the year 1800.

¹ In 1805 he again accepted the Governor-Generalship, this time with a brief to halt, if not to reverse, the expansionist policy of the Marquess Wellesley. In his then state of health, the appointment was virtually a sentence of death, and he had in fact been only two months in India when he died at Ghazipur on October 5th.

15

Last Interlude: The Court and the Cutchery

DISASTROUS though the Treaty of Seringapatam was to the Mysoreans, it at least gave their battered and shrunken country a period of seven years without external war—thrice as long as any similar interlude since Tipu Sultan marched with his father against Balam in 1765. Now, there were only internal enemies to be dealt with, and none of these were formidable. The trouble-makers, of course, were the poligars. Most rulers, notably the English, tolerated these petty barons as long as they behaved themselves reasonably well and paid their taxes, but Tipu disliked them as a class. Whereas in his earlier days, as Mohibbul Hasan explains, he only suppressed the rebels among them, by the end of his reign, on one pretext or another, he had virtually wiped them from the face of Mysore.

By an understandable trait, Tipu tended to be severest with the poligars when something had gone wrong in the greater world of diplomacy or war. Just as we saw him taking it out of a couple of them after the Marathas had worsted him in treaty-making in 1787, so he now exhibited quite exceptional savagery while the allied armies were withdrawing from his territory.

The war had given great scope to the disaffected, especially in northern Mysore. Many poligars whom Tipu had previously exiled returned to their old estates, many were restored by the allies, while others simply proclaimed their independence. All were summarily dealt with, and a special example was made of a squireen called Buswapa Naik, who had seized the fort of Uchangidurga, near Chitaldrug. In about March 1793 Tipu sent Saiyid Ghaffar against him, but he was repulsed, and even the experienced Qamar-ud-din, who came next, had to call up reinforcements. The siege lasted three months, and when the fort was at last stormed, Tipu ordered a ferocious programme of maiming and emasculation for the garrison.

This is an instance in which the details are vouched for not only

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by the chroniclers of the time, but by a later observer like Dr. Buchanan,¹ when he travelled the district in July 1800 he had with him a retired soldier who had actually been on duty at the siege. He says that the capitulation terms offered to Buswapa Naik and his men were not observed, the leading rebels were hanged and the only clemency offered to the rank-and-file was the choice of which limb should be cut off with the large leather-dressers' knives of the country. The few survivors who managed to staunch their haemorrhage with rags dipped in oil had since kept themselves alive by begging.

In neighbouring districts there was a general sacrifice of ears and noses and it is not surprising that within a few months there was hardly a poligar to be found in Tipu's northern provinces.

Episodes such as this, together with his ruthless pursuit of the Holy War, have helped to stoke Tipu's reputation as a monster of cruelty. But in reality they do not do much more than identify him as a man of his place and time, having something perhaps in common with that stock figure of Oriental romance from Old Baghdad to Old Cathay—the despot who entertains his victim to sherbet and refined conversation before conducting him, with exquisite politeness, to the door of the torture chamber. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence at all that Tipu personally enjoyed performing or witnessing atrocities. Wilks² tries to set up a rather absurd incident which he says took place while the Mysorean army was marching from Coimbatore in 1789. He tells how a female elephant was caught and chained by her four feet, and how Tipu insisted on his horrified brahmins joining in a display of swordsmanship by cutting her into slices. From Punganuri, however, we learn that while there *was* a hunt in the Annamallai Hills during which thirty-six elephants were captured, the exercise in question was the traditional and somewhat less barbarous one whereby a goat had its four legs tied together and was cut in half with a single stroke!

We cannot quite finish with this part of the Tipu legend until we shall have returned to his treatment of his prisoners, but from every other aspect we get a picture of him as a domineering, sometimes irascible, but rarely barbarous ruler.

In 1794, when he met his sons on their return from Madras,

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 229–30.

² *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 40.

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Tipu Sultan was forty-four years of age. Most accounts of his personal appearance seem to come from a common source, one of the earliest users of which was Beatson. Portraits (Plates 7 and 16) confirm the idea of square shoulders, a short neck, aquiline nose and arched eyebrows, and the fact that 'contrary to the custom of the deceased Nabob', as Kirmani puts it, he retained his eyelashes and moustache, but shaved his chin. Dirom¹ was told he was of a 'tawny yellow' colour and had strong black whiskers. However, it is Petrie² who, in writing to an English friend in June 1799, gives us the best first-hand description of the ruler of Mysore:

He was about 5ft 7ins in height, uncommonly well made, except in the neck, which was short and large, his leg, ankle and foot beautifully proportioned, his arms large and muscular, with the appearance of great strength, but his hands rather too fine and delicate for a soldier. When I saw him 29 years ago (i.e. in 1770, when Tipu was 20) he was remarkably fair for a Mussulman in India, thin, delicately made, with an interesting mild countenance, of which large animated black eyes were the most conspicuous features. Latterly he grew fat, his face became darker, and his eyes fierce and terrific.

The physical effects of absolutism!

Tipu is sometimes described as having been 'plain' in his dress, but if so it was the plainness of extreme elegance—a Brummel rather than a Prince Regent. To start the day he wore a small Burhanpur turban, a fine white shirt fastened with a brooch of copper and gold, short drawers containing a special pocket with a European watch in it, and leather shoes with iron spurs. However, after his main breakfast he changed into something richer. Now his turban was of red, purple, crimson or green, about fifty yards long and interwoven with threads of gold; the Munshi Qasim³

¹ The 1789 *Account of Tipu Sultan* already cited.

² William Petrie, Member of Council, Madras, for many years. His papers were examined by K. N. V. Sastri (Indian Historical Records Commission, XVIII).

³ *An Account of Tipu Sultan's Court*. Nothing is known of the Munshi except that he was obviously a minor official at Seringapatam (his name does not appear in his own long list of senior civil servants), and a translation of his memoirs is bound up in MSS. Eur. C.10, 10L.

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tells us that he was particularly fond of a turban wrought with tufts which made up a pious quatrain, while in his later years, according to Kirmani, he sported one 'twisted after the manner of the Arabs', with an embroidered end hanging down. His full dress was of fine white cloth cut very tight, high-waisted, long-shirted, and with the sleeves drawn up into pleats and fastened at the breast with a diamond button. Exactly similar in fact to a garment recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum as 'Tipu's dressing gown'. Round his loins was a splendid gold-embroidered kerchief. His sparse jewellery included a selection of rings varied in astrological sequence.

We have ample pictures of Tipu's well-ordered day.¹ He rose before dawn and made a good beginning by being 'shampooed', which Beatson defines as 'pressing or kneading the flesh and muscles for the purpose of promoting the circulation of the fluids'—in other words, he was massaged. Then he washed in strict seclusion; we have already noted his extreme reluctance to expose his person. Prayers and a spell of club-swinging followed. He seems to have had two breakfasts of which the first was more or less medicinal—an electuary consisting of the brains of tame male sparrows'. Before the second there was quite a heavy programme, starting with audiences to high officials and an inspection of his domestic treasury. Then came all-important sessions with the astrologers who told him the state of his stars, with the physicians about the state of his health and with the almoners about the state of his charities. If it happened to be a Saturday, he made an offering to the seven stars of seven different kinds of grain, an iron pan full of sesame oil, a blue cap and a coat, one black sheep and some money. After that he sat down on a silver stool and was shaved—oil of almond and poppy seed only, no water. Enter then a procession of the Superintendents of the Gardens, followed by trains of servants with baskets of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. Any which were not required for the Sultan's table or for 'his father's men' (presumably pensioners) were thriftily dispatched for sale at his stall in the public market. When Tipu indulged in his favourite sport of hunting with cheetahs (see p. 301), this also was fitted into the early hours.

¹ Beatson and the Munshi Qasim are usefully supplemented by Kirmani and by the *Biographical Anecdotes of the late Tipu Sultan*, trans. J. A. Kirkpatrick. (*Asiatic Annual Register*, 1799.)

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At nine o'clock came the second breakfast—nuts, almonds, jelly and fruit, taken in company with two or three sons and certain high officials.

And so to the Hall of Public Audience—a stately scene indeed, and one which tells us much about how the affairs of Mysore were conducted in the days of Tipu Sultan. Every morning the European¹ and other carpets and white floor cloths were spread, under the direction of the Master of the Household, and a throne or *musnud* of cloth of gold with three gold-embroidered pillows was heaped up facing Mecca. A sabre, a dagger and a pair of pistols with tiger-headed golden hilts, together with a vase of special Royal shape, filled with flowers, and a fine white handkerchief, were placed on the right hand of the throne, and on the left was a silver spit box. In front were more vases.

Tipu entered in full state, sat down, and generally ate some *pan*.² Behind him stood two family slaves who acted as 'flappers' to keep off the flies, and five yards away in front sat the Ministers of State with the Persian, Hindi, Canarese, Telegu, and Urdu secretaries, ready to take down instructions in their respective tongues.

Then there passed before the throne the two Masters of Requests—one for the night and the other for the day—the Master of Ceremonies, the Chief Architect, the two Superintendents of Tents and Furniture, the two Postmasters, the Superintendents of the Library, of the various Storehouses, of the Kitchen and of the four Mints; then the two Head Chopdars (heralds) and their followers, with their gold and silver sticks; the Headman of the domestics, the carpet-spreaders and other servants; the mace bearers and axe bearers; the attendants bearing whips for punishment, and those who 'inflicted punishment by pulling his (the delinquent's) ears'; the spearmen and the Superintendent of Police with his Deputy; the Inspectors and Clerks of the public and military bazaars. Last of all to make their obeisance were the play-actors and the story-tellers.

Business then started. One of the Postmasters delivered a bag full of letters and petitions, and various office-holders gave their

¹ Munshi Qasim's word. The idea that European carpets were as much esteemed in the East as Oriental in the West takes a little getting used to.

² Perhaps from the very dish now owned by Lord Harris (p. 361). *Pan* consists of betel nut and lime. It promotes salivation—hence the spit-box.

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reports. The Master of Requests read aloud the names of the officials of the seven great Departments of State (*cutcheries*) who had been warned to attend; they were introduced into the Presence and made obeisance at a proper distance while the two Head Chopdars continued to cry '*May thy sight be clear!—His Justice is unparalleled!—Health to the Refuge of the World!*'

At about three o'clock Tipu retired to his bedchamber to rest, but soon emerged in warlike accoutrements adorned with the tiger's head, and went out to inspect his army, or his factories, or the re-building of the walls of Seringapatam.

If the Munshi is to be believed, Tipu personally examined the new recruits brought forward for his army, listening while the Adjutant in a loud voice read out their qualifications. Those chosen at a first weeding-out were examined a second time and posted to the units which their monarch thought appropriate—the literate ones to the Quartermaster's department or the Pay Corps, and so on. The recruits' proficiency in scripture was always carefully noted.

An hour after sunset Tipu returned to his palace and entertained members of his family and a few courtiers to dinner. He liked to have improving literature read aloud, but we also have accounts of his table talk, from which it appears that while he indulged freely in rough and satirical remarks about his enemies (especially the 'Subadar of the Deccan'—the Nizam), he would allow none of the bawdy badinage that used to delight his father. After dinner he would stroll about and finally read himself to sleep with a work of religion or history. From the time of his defeat by Cornwallis he abandoned his bedstead and took only a few hours rest on a coarse canvas cloth, spread upon the ground.

Such was the daily routine of Tipu Sultan, dictator of Mysore, and there can have been few monarchs who have managed so successfully to combine formal pomp in the dispatch of business with relaxed simplicity in his personal life. About one aspect of the latter, one should add, we know practically nothing. I refer to the zenana. It has already been recorded that Tipu was given two wives in early life, but that one of these was married to him in name only, while the other, Ruqayya Banu, died during the siege of Seringapatam. This made him a natural target after 1792 for princely families seeking a distinguished alliance. However, in

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1795 he married a daughter of Saiyid Saheb who thus, in addition to all his other services to Tipu, now became his father-in-law. This third wife, and a daughter he had by her, both predeceased him.

Beyond that is an area of dense jungle, from which the very number, ages and parentage (on the mother's side) of his children can be only doubtfully disentangled. Mohibbul Hasan gives the usually accepted list of twelve sons in the following order (all, by the way had 'Sultan' as an additional name): Fath Haidar, Muin-ud-din, Abdul Khaliq, Muiz-ud-din, Muhammad Subhan, Shukrullah, Ghulam Ahmad, Guhlan Muhammad, Sarw-ud-din, Muhammad Yasin, Jamai-ud-din, and Munir-ud-din. It will be noted that he makes the hostage boys the third and fourth sons, not the second and third; Bowring,¹ in a careful family tree, puts Abdul Khaliq second and Muiz-ud-din fourth, after Muin-ud-din. The latter seems to be the joker here—as we have seen, he was not even mentioned among the 'three older children' of Tipu who were eligible as hostages. Mohibbul Hasan also credits Tipu with one daughter (other than the one by his third wife, which died. Wilks says this child was a boy!).

Other writers offer variations approaching gibberish. The Munshi (who really ought to know better) lists seven sons only, with Muin-ud-din at the top, but throws in six daughters, 'all by different beds'. The version of an official at Tipu's Court quoted by Captain Kirkpatrick in *Biographical Anecdotes* is that in 1790 Tipu had 'eleven children of whom only two are in marriage; the older a girl of seven years, the younger a boy of four years. The eldest of the natural children is a girl of seventeen years, the second a son of fifteen years, he is a great favourite and accompanies his father upon all occasions. His name is Gholaum Hyder.' Wilks, having mentioned Muin-ud-din and two daughters as the sole legitimate children, then gives a little table showing another seventeen illegitimate as living in 1799, plus twenty-four illegitimate deceased!

It is unfortunate that while Bowring records the death dates of the recognised sons, he does not mention when they were born. However, from scattered references we know that of the eight younger sons, Muhammad Yasin was born in 1785 (and was therefore the fifth, not the tenth son), Muhammad Subhan in

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

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1786, Sarwr-ud-din in 1790, Jamai-ud-din in 1794 and Munir-ud-din in 1796.

Several of these dates derive from papers submitted to the 1806 Vellore Mutiny enquiry (see p. 331) by Colonel Thomas Marriott, then in charge of Tipu's exiled descendants. He does us another service—he reveals that besides the twelve sons, Tipu left in fact *eight* authenticated daughters, named by Marriott (I use his spellings) as Beebee Begum, Asmut Ulnissa, Ummar Ulnissa (married to a son of Saiyid Ibrahim, 'the Bangalore Killedar who behaved so well to his English prisoners'), Fatima (married to a son of the Binky Nabob), Budi Ulnissa, Umdah, Noor Ulnissa and Kuleema.

As to the mothers of all these boys and girls . . . Mohibbul Hasan asserts¹ rather rashly that Tipu 'never kept concubines'. But there is strong reason to believe that the only legitimate son to survive was Muin-ud-din, and Marriott agrees with Wilks that he had two full sisters 'Noor Ulnissa' and 'Kuleema'. About the parentage of some of the others the same authority is helpful, though not necessarily reliable. Fath Haidar's mother, says Marriott, was a dancing girl from Adoni called Rowshumi Begum; Abdul Khaliq's a Hindu lady taken from her parents in Mysore; Muiz-ud-din's was called Durdana Begum and was 'one of twenty women purchased in Delhi by Haidar's agent' and subsequently taken over by his son; Muhammad Yasin, Jamai-ud-din and Munir-ud-din were all by the same mother, and so on. We also chance to know, from the massive correspondence of Prince Ghulam Muhammad with the British Government over family allowances half a century later, that Shukrullah and Ghulam Ahmad had separate mothers who were alive in 1841.

Tipu, in fact, like almost every other eastern prince of his time and later, maintained a harem, though as in the case of his children, some erratic numbers have been quoted. But as it happens we have a statistical return, which proves that Dr. Buchanan was quite correct in saying that when he visited Seringapatam and found the zenana still 'perfectly inviolate' under its usual guard of eunuchs, it contained '600 women, belonging to Tipu or his father'. The full figures are given by Marriott (then 'Captain Marriott, officer in charge of the Mahal at Seringapatam') in the course of a long letter to Josiah Webbe,

¹ In his original edition (see p. 366).

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Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras,¹ on the delicate question of whether some of these women should be allowed to leave the zenana if they wished, and what would happen to their financial provision if they did.

Marriott says there were 601 inmates altogether—268 relicts of Haidar Ali, and 333 of Tipu. In the latter section, he classifies two as 'wives', eighty as women of a superior grade and the rest as their attendants or slaves—cooks, seamstresses, nurses, sweet-meat-makers and the like. One of the wives, 'the Padsha Begum, sister of Gholam Imam', can be none other than the lady originally chosen by Haidar for his son; we have lost all sight of her since 1774, but she had evidently been maintained in Tipu's zenana ever since. The other is a more enigmatic 'Burantie Begum, daughter of Nabob Mir Mah Pussund Beig', of whose status we otherwise know nothing.

Just below in rank were two sisters of the Raja of Coorg, three members of the Mysore family and a niece of Purnaiya's. Marriott adds that the majority of the women were originally Hindus, from families whom the Sultan had put to death or held in confinement; Buchanan makes the point that they had been shut up in the zenana when very young and carefully reared as pious Moslems. He is only one of several chroniclers who give alleged instances of girls—daughters of rebel poligars and the like—forcibly recruited for Tipu's bed. But who is to say which, if any, of these lurid tales are true?

To finish with the question of parenthood, Marriott emphasises that most of the women could be looked upon as Tipu's concubines, some of his children being by women 'menial to those of higher rank'. In fact the mother of Ghulam Ahmad, referred to above, whom Marriott describes as one of 'the finest boys', was a dairymaid, a slave from Constantinople.

We have already seen enough of Tipu's relations with his sons, whatever their origins, to know that he was a good family man. He enjoyed the boys' company when at home, kept them supplied with school-books even when he was on campaign, and saw to it that their manners did him credit. How charming that in the

¹ July 2nd, 1800 (Home Misc. 461, I.O.R., ff. 169-78). The matter had first come up when the famous Père Dubois alleged with obvious exaggeration that the zenana included no fewer than 200 Christian women from the Malabar coast (Arthur Wellesley to Doveton, Dec. 24th, 1799).

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course of a long political letter to the vakils in Madras, he should suddenly interject, 'You will take care in instructing my sons to speak slow and properly to Lord Cornwallis!' This was in fact one of the few unambiguous sides of his character, and we need waste no further words on it.

In another department of life which had tremendous importance for him—religion—he is more elusive. The easy thing is to accept him as a straightforward persecuting bigot, an eighteenth-century Sword of Islam. He certainly followed the routines of piety, with much reading of the Koran, punctilious ritual ablutions, texts in his turban and the name of God ready to his lips and pen. But he was also intensely superstitious, with an obviously higher opinion of astrologers than of *maulvis*. The seven stars rather than the hand of Allah seem to rule his universe, and it is significant that he paid tremendous attention to the interpretation of dreams. As early as the year 1800 the world was supplied with translated extracts from *Tippoo's Dream Book*¹ found in his palace after his death. They all seem to have been *political*—at least Tipu managed to relate his interpretations to the Holy War, to the effeminate character of the Marathas, to the death of Nizam Ali, to the slaying of Christians, and such like congenial topics. A couple of specimens will perhaps suffice:

Prior to the night attack on Shanoor² . . . I had a dream. Methought a young man of a beautiful countenance, a stranger, came and sat down and methought I jested with him, in the manner that a person playfully talks with a woman; at the same time I say in my heart, 'It is not my custom to enter into playful discourse with any one'. In the instant the youth arose, and walking a few paces returned, when he loosened his hair from beneath his turban and opening the fastening of his robe, displayed his bosom, and I saw it was a woman. I immediately called and seated her, and said unto her, 'Whereas before I looked upon you as a woman, and jested with you, it now appears you are a woman in the dress of a man. My conjecture has well succeeded.' In the midst of this discourse the morning dawned, and I awoke.

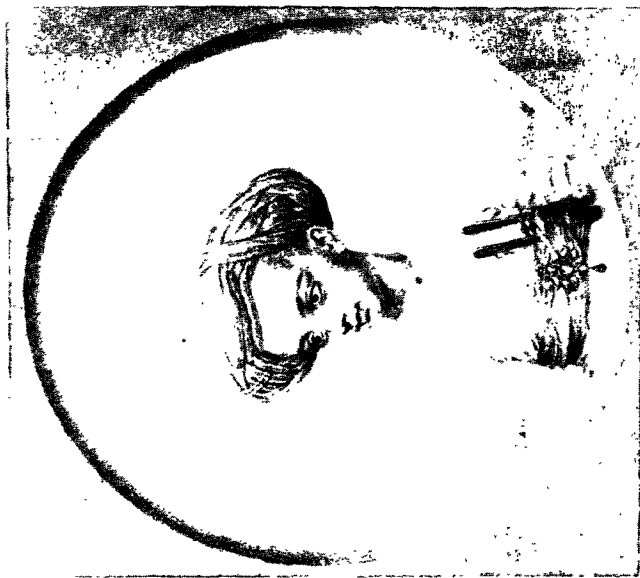
I imparted my dream to the people about me and interpreted it thus: That please God these Marathas have put on the clothing of men, but in fact are in character women.

¹ Beatson, Appendix XXXV. The original is now in the Indian Office Library.

² For the siege of Savanur in 1786, see p. 105.



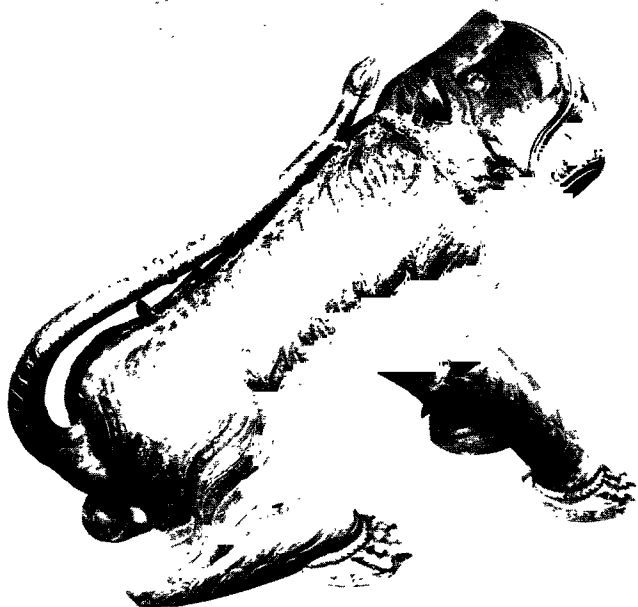
9. Ghulam Ali Khan, the famous lame *rakil*, by Thomas Hickey
Daria Daulat Museum



10. The hostage princes - Abdul Khaliq (*left*) and Muiz-ud-din
Drawn by John Smart at Madras in 1792, *British Museum*



11. 'Marquess Cornwallis receiving the sons of Tippoo Sultan as Hostages'
Engraving by Orme, after the Oriental Club's original by Mather Brown. Ghulam Ali is seen on the left in his carrying-chair



12(a). Bronze mortar cast in the form of a seated tiger
Tower of London Armouries



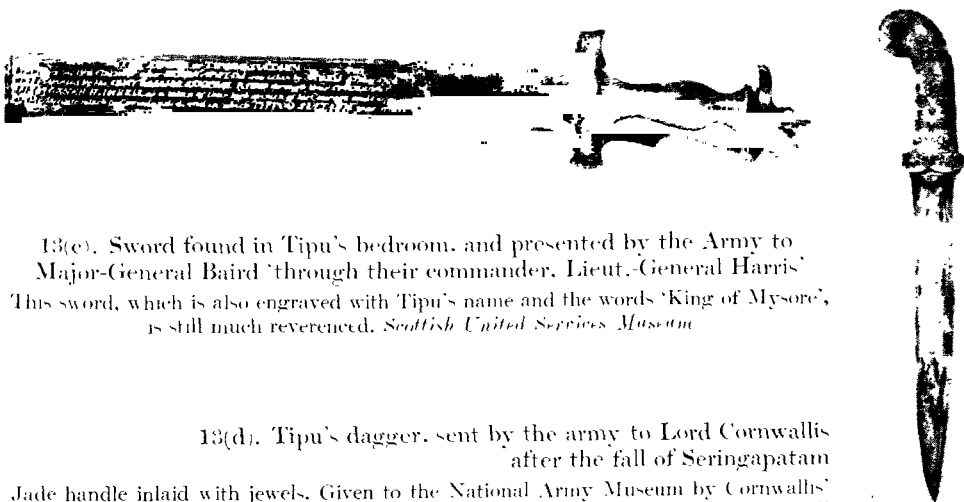
12(b). Tiger breech-block of a gun captured at Seringapatam
 and brought to England by the 2nd Lord Clive
Powis Castle



13(a). Sword with finely stylised tiger head hilt
Poona Castle Museum



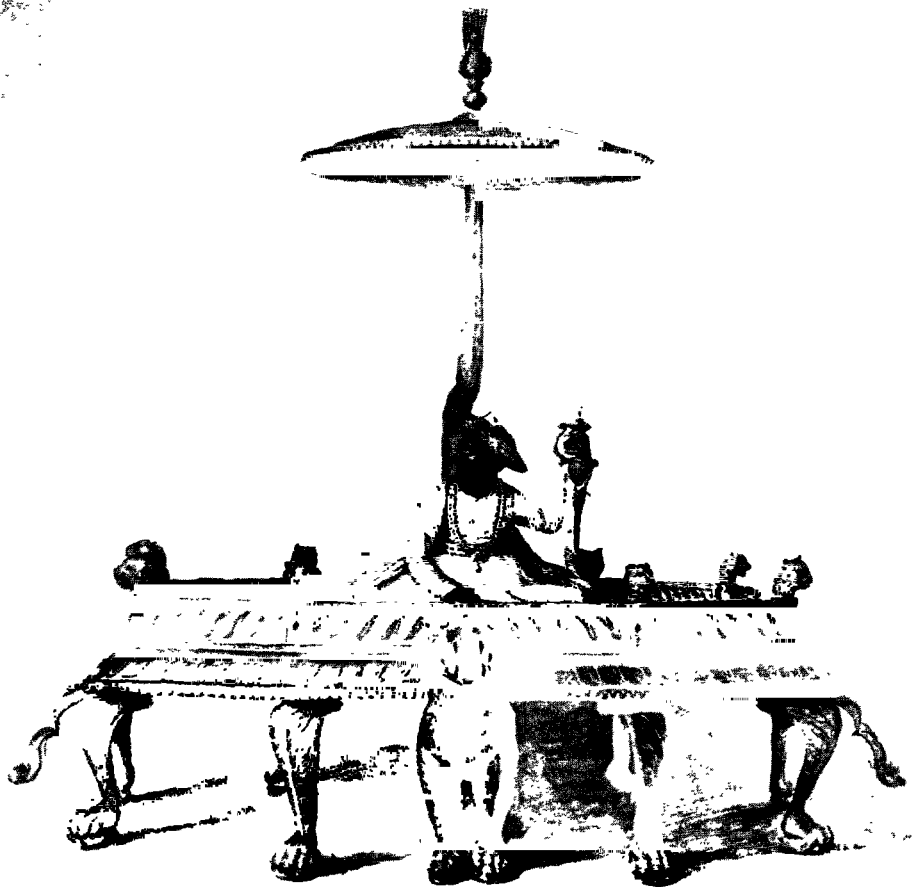
13(b). Dress sword, presented to Major-General Baird by his field officers
On hilt, a reproduction of Henry Singleton's painting 'The Surrender of the Two Sons of Tippoo Sultaun to General Sir David Baird'. Both the original painting and the sword are the property of Sir David Baird, 5th Bt.



13(c). Sword found in Tipu's bedroom, and presented by the Army to Major-General Baird 'through their commander, Lieut.-General Harris'. This sword, which is also engraved with Tipu's name and the words 'King of Mysore', is still much revered. *Scottish United Services Museum*

13(d). Tipu's dagger, sent by the army to Lord Cornwallis after the fall of Seringapatam

Jade handle inlaid with jewels. Given to the National Army Museum by Cornwallis' descendants, Lieut.-Colonel P. J. C. and Major E. H. Trousdell



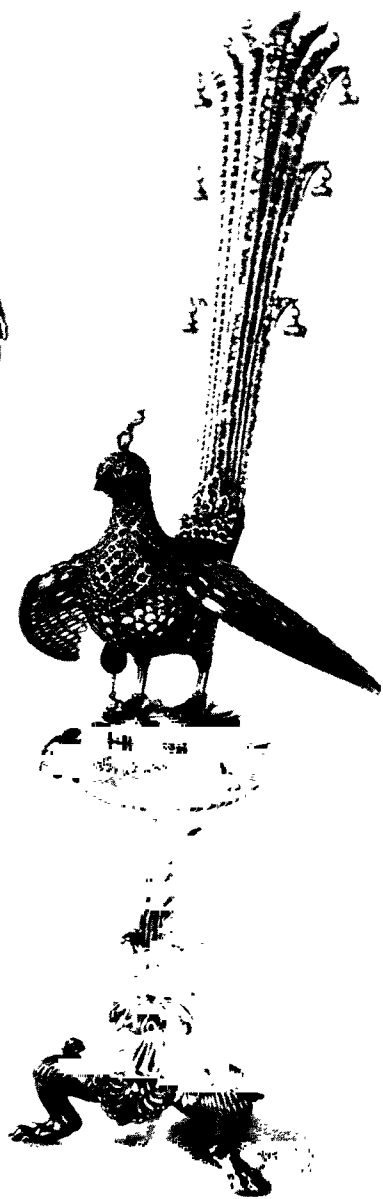
14(a). 'Tipu Sultan on his Throne'

The date of this Indian water-colour is uncertain, and some details are doubtful. An engraving in De la Tour's *History of Ayder Ali* shows the large Tiger Head (compare Pl. 15b) as simply protruding from under the octagonal structure. *Powis Castle Museum*



14(b). One of the gold and jewelled Tiger Head finials shown in pl. 14(a)

Powis Castle Museum



15(a). Huma Bird (Bird of Paradise),
from Tipu's throne

It can be seen above the canopy (opposite). Height 6 ins., wing-span 8 ins. Body of massive gold, inlaid with diamonds, emeralds and rubies. Cup-shaped support designed by the Regent's famous silversmith, Paul Storr. *H.M. The Queen*



15(b). Tiger Head from Tipu's throne

1ft. round behind the ears. Plate gold incised with Tipu's 'tiger pattern' and moulded over a wooden core. The splendid teeth are of rock-crystal. Paws added after the Tiger Head was brought to England. *H.M. The Queen*



16. Prince Fath Haidar, Tipu's eldest son, by Thomas Hickey

Drawn at Vellore on March 1st, 1801. Fath Haidar is said closely to have resembled his father, and this drawing may well give a better idea of what Tipu actually looked like than any of his own formalised portraits. *Darja Daulat Museum*

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By the favour of God and the aid of his apostle . . . I attacked the army of the infidels by surprise. I myself advancing with two or three hundred men, penetrated the camp of the infidels, crushing them as I went, so far as the tent of Hurry Punt Pharkiah (Haripant) and they all fled like women.

Then in August 1790, when the army was on the march in Malabar, Tipu had a vision of a cow with its calf, in semblance like a large striped tiger; its forelegs were those of a cow and had a little motion; its hind legs were wanting, and it was most destructive. Having carefully reconnoitred it, he approached and cut it and its calf in pieces. Interpretation:

That the hill Christians, resembling cows with their calves, have the appearance of tigers; and by the favour of God . . . all the irreligious Christians will be slain. The slight motion of the legs is thus interpreted—that they will make some slight attempts at resistance. The want of the hinder legs is thus explained—that none will afford them help and no Mussulman will receive injury at their hands. Through the aid of God be it so.

Such dreams and interpretations remind us that whatever the depths or shallows of his private religion, Tipu never forgot his duties to the Holy War. Mohibbul Hasan,¹ defending him against charges of persecution, makes great play with his employment of Hindus and his gifts to their temples, and defends his resumption of temple lands. It is certainly interesting that though in his local government regulations (see p. 218) he instructs his Amildars to take over all jewels, robes and utensils belonging to the priests, he also tells them to issue them when required for worship and then to put them away again with care.

But it must be remembered that Tipu was in essence a Moslem ruler over a non-Moslem land ringed round with enemies, and he could only hope to keep his footing with the help of the Hindu majority of his people. To him, all non-Moslems were 'infidels' whom it would no doubt be a pious act to exterminate. Yet he was shrewd enough in action, and only drew the sword of persecution against those, like the Nairs and the Malabar Christians, whom he regarded as also a danger to the State. Even his co-religionists, the Moplahs of Cannanore and neighbourhood, were not exempt

¹ He devotes a persuasive chapter (pp. 354–63) to 'Religious Policy'.

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from those furious edicts about hanging everyone on trees, when they took arms against him. Nor need we palliate the stories of highly-placed conspirators strangled, impaled, or dragged at the feet of elephants. The even more horrible public ritual of hanging, drawing and quartering was still the statutory penalty for high treason in England when Tipu died.

In short, the Tiger of Mysore was only tigerish in certain calculated directions. However, he had no one but himself to blame if that label became attached to him because, as we saw as long ago as Chapter 2, the tiger was certainly his cult animal. I do not propose to go into this at the length which its many curious aspects invite, because the whole story is accessible in Mrs. Mildred Archer's richly illustrated monograph, *Tippoo's Tiger*, published in 1959 by the Victoria and Albert Museum. Why the V. and A.? Because among its treasured exhibits is the one shown in Plate 17. Mrs. Archer gives us the whole history of this amazing life-size mechanical toy; how it was found in the Palace at Seringapatam in 1799 and sent home to East India House as a trophy; how generations of visitors took away lasting memories of its realistic aspect and the still more realistic tiger-snarls and victim-screams emitted by the organ concealed in its bowels;¹ how it drifted later to the India Office, thence to the Indian Exhibition Galleries in South Kensington and finally to the Museum, where it has been lovingly restored and placed on view in company with other Tipu relics.

Mrs. Archer is extremely interesting on the origins of this terrific object and the possible identity of the European shown in the tiger's grip. If one had to nominate a likely victim, the natural choice would be Colonel Baillie, whose defeat had such lasting significance for Tipu. But even though the figure is actually one of a civilian, Mrs. Archer is able, remarkably enough, to link it with another leading character (one cannot say 'hero') of the battle of Pollilur—Sir Hector Munro. She draws our attention to a sensational incident which took place on Saugor Island in the Hughli River in December 1792, when Sir Hector's only son was

¹ Strictly speaking, the growls and screams—as Mr. R. W. Skelton, Assistant Keeper in the Museum's Indian Department, kindly demonstrated to me—are mechanically produced, though in muted form these days; the organ, which has a normal keyboard, could have provided either supplementary discords or a triumphal air to follow.

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mauled to death by an immense tiger before his hunting companions could rescue him. The tragedy was widely reported and it can be stated with some confidence that in commissioning his tiger (probably from French craftsmen) soon after the Third Mysore War, Tipu was harking back to the victorious days of 1780. The Staffordshire earthenware figure, 'The Death of Munrow' (Plate 4 in Mrs. Archer's monograph),¹ which shows a close resemblance to 'Tippoo's Tiger' and was put on sale a few years after the latter had become a popular exhibit in London, does seem to stress the connection with the English general's son.

Other facets of Tipu's tiger-cult on which Mrs. Archer touches include the *bubri* or tiger-stripe cloth which he ordered for his troops; the tiger-headed weapons and personal adornments of which we have already had a glimpse in this chapter, and above all his tiger-supported throne. This was not of course the *musnud* of cushions which was piled up each morning in the Hall of Audience, but the much more formal affair shown in Plate 14a. It rested on a full-sized gilded tiger, the head of which, with its great rock-crystal eyes and teeth, still glares from a showcase in the State Apartments at Windsor Castle. The throne itself (an octagon eight feet across) would have been difficult to transport to England, but in any case it was broken up immediately after the fall of Seringapatam.

A grand throne-mounting ceremony had been planned, with festivities which were to include, it is said, a general delaying of marriages in Mysore for a period so that 12,000 weddings could be solemnised the same day. There is considerable vagueness about when all this was intended to take place. Originally, it seems, it was linked in Tipu's mind with his assumption of the title of Padshah in 1786. He then postponed it until his Ambassadors got back from Constantinople with the Caliph's *firman* (1790), but the Third Mysore War supervened and thereafter he was too depressed to make the mounting of his throne an occasion for popular rejoicing. So it is a matter of conjecture to what extent the great clumsy majestic object depicted in our plate was actually used. Major Price declares that Tipu Sultan never sat on it at all.

Finally, the references by various 'captives of Tipu' and by

¹ One of these figures, sold originally no doubt on a fair-ground for a shilling or two, fetched £650 at Sotheby's, London, in January 1969.

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Dr. Buchanan to live tigers chained to the front of the palace or in its very corridors, might seem fanciful but for the testimony of two hard-headed witnesses. The first is Colonel Arthur Wellesley, writing the day after the capture of Seringapatam in 1799:

There are some tigers here, which I wish Meer Allum would send for, or else I must give orders to have them shot, as there is no food for them and nobody to attend to them, and they are getting violent.¹

Sure enough, a few days later Major (then Captain) Price and the other Prize Agents, busy in the Treasury, heard a discharge of musketry outside. Thinking that the population had risen, they snatched up a 'bulse of diamonds' which they were registering and rushed to the door. There they saw six or seven tigers 'scampering about' and being fired on by a party of men from the 33rd Foot. 'Whether from the effect of the shot or a convulsive effort by these formidable pets', their moorings in the north verandah had given way, but after a few wild moments they were all destroyed, 'one of them', says Price, 'giving his last roar actually at the side of my palanquin'.²

I now propose to follow Wilks in devoting this relative pause in Tipu's affairs to a further glance at those famous 'innovations' which I first touched on in Chapter 8. There seems no doubt that as the years passed, his sense of reality waned and his restlessness increased, so that what began as desirable reforms deteriorated into change for its own sake. Back in 1784, he took a quite sensible step in substituting a calendar based on the Hindu system for the Moslem calendar with its twelve lunar months which plod on regardless of the solar year. With this, of course, went a complete new nomenclature, but three years later Tipu chose to confuse his unfortunate subjects by re-naming all the months once more. And though he still linked his '*Malaudi era*' as he called it, with the

¹ Postscript to a letter to General Harris, May 5th, 1799. Arthur Wellesley's correspondence is quoted from *The Despatches of Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, ed. Gurwood (London, John Murray, 1837), unless the *Supplementary Despatches*, ed. 2nd Duke of Wellington (Murray, 1858) are specifically cited.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 439.

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life of Mahomet, he started it from the date of the Prophet's spiritual birth instead of from his *Hijra* (*Hegira*) or Flight, as in the Moslem calendar.

It is difficult to see any practical value behind Tipu's sweeping alteration of weights and measures and I would question whether the illiterate but independent villager took much notice when he was suddenly told to stop measuring his grain in age-long *seers* and *maunds*, and to start thinking in new-fangled *dekks*. However, it was all worked out in deadly earnest. For example, the standard measure of length was defined as 24 thumb-breadths, 'because there are 24 letters in the confession of faith'. The breadth of a thumb was fixed by that of a certain number of grains of rice of a specific weight, and the whole was then translated into a new *Cos* of $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles, against the normal Indian $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. It was also laid down, with magnificent pedantry, that if the State letter-carriers did not cover this distance in exactly $33\frac{3}{4}$ minutes, they would be flogged.¹

Naturally, an innovating monarch must have a new coinage and in this Tipu showed taste as well as self-assertion—his coins are universally regarded as among the finest issued in eighteenth-century India. They also had to have distinctive values—his *Sultany Fanam* was worth sevenpence, against the varied but lower values elsewhere, his *Sultany Pagoda* ten shillings against the usual eight shillings.

Buchanan remarks that Tipu, like other Indian conquerors, was 'a mighty changer of old pagan names', so as to give them a Moslem cast. Even his natal Devanhalli was rechristened *Yusufabad* (after Joseph, 'the most beautiful of men'), Sira became *Rustumbad*, Mysore *Nuzzurbar*, Calicut *Islambad*, Krishnagiri *Fulk-il-Azum*, and Dindigul *Khalikabad*, while Chitaldrug was now unrecognisable as *Furrokh-yab-Hissar*—'the citadel of grace'. All this lapsed after Tipu's death.

In several instances, of course, he went further—he substituted not merely new names but new towns for old. A memorable example was the destruction of Calicut in favour of Ferokhabad. The latter had a *floruit* of just twenty months—from May 1788 to December 1790, when the English expelled the Mysoreans from the area and the inhabitants returned with joy to their old haunts. Tipu's new capital is now a village called Ferokh.

¹ Kirkpatrick, *Letters*, CLXXX.

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In Mysore itself, Doddballapur was virtually depopulated in the interests of a new town at Nundidurga, which was later abandoned in its turn. Thousands of families were transplanted from Sira to create the Seringapatam suburb of Shahr Ganjam. At Ramgiri, Tipu removed the town from the west to the east side of the Arkawali river but after the fort above had surrendered to the English he dismantled it and shifted the town back to its original site. There seems to have been no more compunction about uprooting a civilian community than about posting a regiment to a new depot.

From towns to provinces. Here Tipu's itch for change did definite harm and frustrated his own ends. Between the Treaty of Mangalore and the year 1786 he redrew the local boundaries so as to increase the number of provinces from seven to nine and then from nine to seventeen. After the Third Mysore War he carved up his diminished realm into no fewer than thirty-seven provinces. Each was under the control of co-equal governors—the *Asaf* (civil) and *Faujdar* (military), who were supposed not to interfere with each other. The provinces were sub-divided into over 1,000 groups of about forty villages each under an *Amildar*, with *Tarafdhars* as their subordinate officers. We happen to have the Code of Instructions issued to one of these Amildars, and I think it can be claimed that if all its 127 clauses had been fully implemented, 'The Second District of Waumhoor dependent on the Cutchery of Awulapatam'¹ would have been one of the best governed—if slightly over-governed—regions of the earth. Everything is provided for. Extortion, whether by officials, by press gangs or by the soldiery, is to be punished. Good farming is to be promoted in a dozen ways—cash advances to needy peasants for buying ploughs and to active ones for taking over

¹ 'The Mysorean Revenue Regulations', translated from the Persian by Burrish Crisp in 1792, form part of *British India Analysed*. The manuscript was found by Colonel John Murray (Military Auditor-General) during the Coimbatore campaign of 1791. The region of Awulapatam formed part of Tipu's recent Calicut conquests, and some local terms are used. Much of the code, however, was common form in Mysore, as is shown by a closely similar set of regulations for 'Raicottah, subordinate to Bangalore', a translation of which by Francis Gladwin is in Home Misc. 251 I.O.R., ff. 167-282. This runs to 125 clauses, of which the last is a tremendous onslaught on tobacco in the style of King James I ('the smoke reaching the heart impedes the remembrance of God, the special duty required of that member' etc.).

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derelict land, tax concessions to those growing desirable crops such as sugar cane, betel and coconut, the planting of valuable trees—mangoes and the like—at the rate of 200 per village, the careful protection of teak, sandal and other timber needed by the government.

The code's social aims are vigorously, sometimes ruthlessly, expressed. Vintners' shops need not be abolished, but their numbers must be halved, and the tax on the survivors doubled.¹ On the other hand there is to be no permissiveness over cannabis (*bhang*)—those who grow it, whether 'by stealth behind their houses' or otherwise, are to be fined. There is a ban on the sale of girl orphans to Hindu temples. Any Christians detected are to be sent to Seringapatam under guard and their goods seized. The children of thieves and robbers are likewise to be shipped off, and their parents to be tied together with ropes and made to carry earth for the government. Work is to be found for the lame and blind. There are to be no more privately owned slaves or prostitutes, and any one who teaches the children of such to read or write is to have his tongue torn out. A gentler, and indeed memorable edict comes as a sort of postscript (Clause 127): 'where peasants are convicted of offences now punished by fines, such fines shall be commuted in future and the accused 'in place of every pagoda of the fine adjudged against him, shall plant two mango and two almond trees in front of his village, and water and tend them till they are the height of three *derras*'. The world's criminal codes have not yet caught up with that.

The miscellaneous duties of Amildars fill pages. We see them hiring bullocks, breeding sheep and searching out peasants who will rear brood mares and foals; persuading tanners to dress the hides of animals which have died of the rot, for no other payment than the flesh; looking after tanks and wells; buying goods for government in the market, (but always at a fanam or two below list price); seeing that every householder has a firelock and exercises with it every Friday; conducting censuses, but tactfully, so as not to panic the peasants into absconding; making sure that every scrap of waste paper is picked up and buried—and so on, endlessly.

It is hardly with surprise that we read in Clause 41 about the

¹ Probably the first stage towards the total prohibition which Tipu enforced elsewhere.

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working hours of the Amildars and their staffs. They are to attend at the cutchery from nine till five, when they are allowed to go home, but they must return at 8 p.m. and remain in their offices till 3 a.m. making up the day's accounts. Only when these have been despatched to headquarters may they 'retire to rest'.

Of course, actual life in Tipu Sultan's Mysore was not in the least like that. All his checks and balances, and even solemn oath-taking ceremonies, were powerless against the laziness and corruption of officials, whether old-fashioned Brahmins or the often inefficient Moslems who had been thrust into office. By the test of revenue-collection, the system (though no doubt as well-designed as any in India) leaked at every joint. As Munro¹ explains in one of his luminous letters (June 8th, 1794), 'all parties soon found it wiser to agree and share the public money, rather than to send complaints to the Sultan'. The Asaf, the Amildar, the Tarafdhar, the land farmer and the village accountant each had his share, 'as well ascertained as their pay', and by Munro's estimate equivalent to about 30% of the total yield. While the amounts collected in the Baramahal in his own day were almost the same as before 1792, 'the difference between the sums carried to the account of the Company and those which found their way into Tipu's treasury, can be entirely ascribed to the difference in personal character between Captain Read and Tipu's Asophs'.

The interesting thing about Munro's testimony is that it relates to a district and a period unaffected by the deterioration from which Tipu's administration almost certainly suffered after the Third Mysore War. The Baramahal was of course part of the English spoils under the Treaty of Seringapatam, and Read and Munro had taken over at once from Tipu's pre-war officials. All the evidence is that things became much worse in the areas out of which he was obliged to screw every fanam he could to pay his war indemnity instalments. Tax assessments were raised by more than a third, and much of the burden fell on lands which had just been

¹ Thomas Munro, b. May 27th, 1761. Served in the Second and Third Mysore Wars. Civil administration of the Baramahal under Alexander Read 1792-9. On the Commission for Mysore 1799. Ended his Indian service as Governor of Madras 1819-27. One of the greatest of the East India Company's servants. His letters are quoted from *The Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro, Bart.*, by the Rev. G. R. Glieg (London, Colburn & Bentley, 1830).

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dreadfully ravaged by 'three invading and one defending army', in Dr. Buchanan's phrase.

For reasons given on p. 364, Buchanan's reports must not be accepted uncritically. But he makes it clear beyond doubt that though his tour of Mysore was carried out within eighteen months of Wellesley's campaign, the marches and counter-marches of 1799 had merely intensified the terrible damage that was done in 1791-2. What Tipu's scorched-earth measures left intact, the camp-followers and grain dealers in Cornwallis's train laid waste; John Malcolm¹ is an eye-witness to the 'cruelty and rapacity' of the Nizam's forces, while it can be assumed that any district through which Parashuram Bhau and his Marathas passed had hardly begun to recover ten years later. All this, apart from the towns and fortified villages individually besieged, stormed and sacked!

It is probably the supreme tribute to the internal strength of the Haidar-Tipu dynasty that, despite the shortcomings of its servants, it survived the strains of that time without bankruptcy, without rebellion, and without a collapse of the government machine.

¹ Kaye, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 16 *et seq.*

Voices from the Dungeons

IN trying to disengage the historical Tipu Sultan from the Tippoo Sahib of legend, we need to look more narrowly at his treatment of his English prisoners—a matter touched on several times since it first came up in Chapter 4. I then mentioned three records published while the successive dramas of Seringapatam were still topical, and re-issued in truncated form in our own time. These are not of course the sole sources. Apart from frequent references in the Press and in private or official letters, to individual prisoners and their fate, we have several extended narratives almost as full as those of Bristow, Scurry and the anonymous ‘Officer of Colonel Baillie’s Detachment’. One at least was actually printed, but in the depths of that haggis of a work *The Lives of the Lindsays*, which cannot be more clearly described than by its own sub-title, ‘A Memoir of the Houses of Crawford and Balcarres, by Lord Lindsay, to which are added Extracts from the Official Correspondence of Alexander, sixth Earl of Balcarres, during the Maroon War, together with Personal Narratives by his Brothers the Hon. Robert, Colin, James, John and Hugh Lindsay, and by his Sister, Lady Anne Barnard’.¹

The only one of these seven communicative siblings who concerns us at the moment is John. Like the ‘Officer’, he was captured at Pollilur, and was marched off to Mysore in company with David Baird, Captain Monteath and others, as described in Chapter 4. The value of his story is that it is not anonymous, is largely in the form of a diary and, in contrast to the tales of Bristow and Scurry, does not appear to have been much ‘contaminated’ by earlier published material. On the other hand it is

¹ London, John Murray, 1849 (3 vols.). In the third volume, alongside John Lindsay’s story of his imprisonment, appears James’s narrative of the Battle of Pollilur (he did not actually serve there, but was killed later at Cuddalore), and Lady Anne Barnard’s entrancing memories of life at the Cape of Good Hope in 1797, where Lord Macartney was Governor and Lord Wellesley made a memorable pause on his way to take up the Governor-Generalship of India later in the same year. It was Colin who heard the dying words of Colonel John Campbell, of Mangalore.

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confined to life, already so well documented, in the Seringapatam prisons between 1780 and 1784—a useful cross-check, perhaps, but what we really need is parallel testimony for Bangalore,¹ Bednur and some of the smaller fortresses where English prisoners were from time to time immured.

Officers were as a rule segregated from other ranks and had more privileges; the European private in turn stood a better chance than the unfortunate sepoy. But the real distinction emerging from all the confused material is one to which the contemporary English—from the Governor-General-in-Council to the man in the London street—kept their eyes tight shut; it was not between social classes or military ranks, but between those who remained prisoners of war in the ordinary sense and those who, whether voluntarily or otherwise, accepted the outward forms of Mohammedanism and took service under Tipu. Once they had done that, he regarded them as his subjects, and therefore as excluded from any negotiation about the return of prisoners. Most—not quite all—of the endlessly renewed accusations of bad faith against him in the matter of releases can, if my view is correct, be traced to that one fact.

Naturally, the distinction only gradually emerges from the survivors' tales. Most of their experiences start in the way already described in Chapter 4—capture in a land or sea battle, the brutality of Haider and his subordinates contrasted with the chivalry of the French and (at any rate in the early stages) the civilities offered by Tipu. The victims' miseries increase as they are marched off in chains to Seringapatam or Bangalore, suffering agonies from wounds or disease, and from seeing their comrades dying beside them. The 'Officer' was one of a group of wounded men who were taken to Arni instead of being sent direct to prison, and his diary tolls like a bell:

September 20th. This day was marked by the death of Mr. John Baillie, cadet.

22nd. And this by that of Ensign Dick.

¹ How interesting, for example, it would be to have the journal of the redoubtable Captain Gowdie, spokesman of the Bangalore prisoners when the Commissioners were sending them 'comforts' in December 1783! Reference has already been made to one Bangalore Commandant, Saiyid Ibrahim, who was so good to his European prisoners that in after years the 2nd Lord Clive, Governor of Madras, ordered a mausoleum to be erected to his memory.

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29th. And this by that of Lieutenant Cox. His body was thrown into the bed of a river.

Once they arrived above the Ghats, however, there was a gradual diminuendo of horror. Some of the prisoners were placed in actual dungeons (Plate 2a) but both Lindsay and the 'Officer' were put into the building in Seringapatam a drawing of which accompanies the latter's narrative—the structure was about seventy feet long by fifty feet wide with four windowless rooms (sixteen by ten) in the corners and a tiny courtyard in the centre. Here some scores of men spent four years. Wretched quarters, yet like P.O.W.s in all ages, the inmates gradually found means to make their captivity tolerable by pursuing hobbies and now and then baiting their guards.

The officers were allowed one gold fanam a day (fivepence) to feed themselves. This they did through the agency of the soldier servants whom they retained throughout and who went foraging in the public markets. They managed to save enough to send occasional relief to other prisoners being worse treated than themselves, and also to buy bits of material to make clothes. Lindsay himself records that while he was useless at carpentry, he became a very good tailor, and having made three shirts and three pairs of trousers for himself, he began working for others. Baird kept one prison-made shirt for years as a souvenir, only losing it in his baggage during Sir John Moore's retreat to Corunna in 1808. The 'Officer' records an astounding list of other articles produced during the long years, mainly from bamboo—tables, stools, cots, bird-cages, squirrel-traps, backgammon boards and trunks ('1,100 pieces to the trunk'); dice made from ivory procured by stealth from the bazaar; playing cards from two folds of paper and one of cloth, polished with the jaw-bone of a sheep; pens from fowl quills; and ink from lamp-black painfully collected every day. One of the products of the last-named was no doubt Lieutenant Thewlis's 'Song of Seringapatam', printed in full by the 'Officer', but perhaps too jejune to bear quotation.

Apart from an occasional 'blitz' by their ill-conditioned gaoler (his name is given by Lindsay as 'Mobit Khan'), in one of which their five books were impounded,¹ things jogged along not too

¹ They were *Smollett's History of England* (Vol. I), 'the third of Pope', a prayer book, half of Johnson's Dictionary, and Mrs. Glass on *The Art of*

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badly until May 10th, 1781, when a gang of blacksmiths suddenly descended on the prison and all the officers were fettered. The leg irons used, eight or nine pounds in weight and allowing a step of only eight inches, were a cruel imposition. Though the prisoners made cloth 'spatterdashes' which protected their shins somewhat, they could take very little exercise, and had to fall back on their cards and backgammon tables, with the killing of 'innumerable quantities of rats' as their only active diversion.

No reason has ever been assigned for this treatment—it is too early in date to be linked with any of the conspiracies which later caused Tipu to look on his prisoners with suspicion. According to Mobit Khan, it was done on the direct orders of the 'Nabob' (still Haidar Ali). The fact that there was no trace of improvement when Tipu succeeded in December 1782 proves that he had by now lost any courteous ideas he may originally have held about the treatment of prisoners of war.

On the darker accusations against him, it is dangerous to be dogmatic. I have already given grounds for rejecting the belief—universally held at the time—that he caused General Mathews to be poisoned, but there is a distinct question mark over what happened to a group of Mathews's officers who were sent to the fortress of Chitaldrug. Though no first-hand evidence exists, Lindsay and the 'Officer' both quote circumstantial reports by sepoy of their guard who had been transferred from Chitaldrug and who declared that the Killedar, on Tipu's orders, had forced eighteen officers to drink poison, flogging some of the recalcitrant till they gave in. Their bodies were then thrown into a wood as a prey for tigers. This sounds neither like an invention nor the unadorned truth, but if it is authentic the only motive can have been Tipu's bitter resentment against Mathews's men over the whole course of events at Bednur.

Three other officers who are supposed to have been taken to an out-of-the-way spot and done to death were Captains Rumley, Sampson and Frazer. They had originally been brought to Seringapatam with Colonel Baillie, but on February 26th, 1783, they were removed to the fort at Mysore, and like the Chitaldrug men, offered poison. Rumley resisted, snatched the commander's

Cookery. Later the books were returned during the day, but collected again each night, when the gaolers seemed to think the Europeans could 'do a good deal of mischief' with them.

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sword and killed him and two of the guards before being overpowered and cut to pieces. Lindsay says that he cannot account for Tipu having 'particularised' these three unfortunates, and there the matter must be left.

Baillie himself almost certainly met a natural death. Special efforts were made to coax him into the Mysorean service, but he would have none of it. His health steadily declined, adequate medical help was denied him and after being reported 'in a dangerous way' in September 1782, he died on or about November 13th.

A crime which must be regarded as proved was the murder of three prisoners at Hosur (p. 166). Several witnesses testify to the finding of their bodies and identify one of them as a naval officer called Hamilton. He had been decapitated with two sabre blows.¹

Finally, there is the question of a small-scale massacre of prisoners which Tipu is supposed to have ordered personally on the eve of the fall of Seringapatam in 1799. Since the story is told in detail by Beatson² on the authority of Captain William Macleod (in charge of Intelligence during both the Third and Fourth Mysore Wars) there seems no reason to doubt it. Macleod's report to the Commander-in-Chief states that thirteen European soldiers, including eight who had lost their way on the night of April 6th, were put to death in batches between April 25th and 28th. Macleod was told by Dewai Row, an accountant concerned with the prisoners of war, that

each party of Europeans condemned to suffer was removed at night from the prison and led to a square building, behind Nunda Raj's house, called the Hackery stables. Here the savage mode of destroying them was by breaking their necks in twisting the head, while the body was held fast. The executioners were the Jetties, a cast of Hindus who perform feats of strength. The bodies of these unfortunate prisoners were rolled up in mats, and carried out to the fort to be buried.

Later a peon volunteered to show where this was, and some officers sent there by Colonel Wellesley identified at least one body as a soldier of the 33rd Regiment.

¹ *Authentic Memoirs of Tipoo Sultan*, by an officer of the East India Company's Service (London, for the author, 1799).

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 166-8.

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The above would seem to be the sum total of the capital crimes, authenticated or otherwise, of Tipu Sultan against his European prisoners. They are no greater than those of many tyrants before him—ininitely less than we have seen committed by the sophisticated rulers of our own day. To them, of course, have to be added the violent deaths, tortures and mutilations inflicted on people of his own race. But even these do not bear the marks of blood-lust or deliberate cruelty; they seem rather to be the work of a ruthless and suspicious personality, determined to make himself secure by whatever means came to hand.

If one was to give exhaustive treatment to the other class of Tipu's prisoners—those who to one degree or another 'collaborated'—this would become a very long chapter indeed. Scurry and Bristow, who belonged to this class, are verbose; Lindsay, the 'Officer' and their P.O.W. colleagues have frequent observations upon them; and a great deal of casual information turned up as these men gradually drifted back to British India after the successful campaigns of Cornwallis and Wellesley. One particular reason why the documentation is bulky is that the 'collaborators' were nervous and unhappy characters, always on the alert to justify themselves with vivid and clearly exaggerated accounts of the torments which they underwent before consenting to play Tipu's game.

If they do seem, in some cases, to have given way rather easily and quickly, there are mitigating circumstances. The first is that they felt themselves at the mercy of monsters—whether Haidar or his son—whose names to the ordinary soldier or seaman were synonyms for cruelty; the second is that for the most part they were pitifully young. Edward Scurry was only fourteen when he sailed out of Plymouth Sound in H.M.S. *Hannibal*¹ in the year 1780, and he was one of fifty-two boys, none of them over seventeen, who were selected for moslemisation in the early part of 1783. Bristow, though he was the same age as Scurry when he

¹ A number of English prisoners, mainly from this ship, were handed over to Haidar Ali by Admiral Suffren in July 1782, after negotiations for their release or exchange had broken down. The circumstances are much disputed.

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'commenced soldier' with a shirt, a pair of trousers and half-a guinea as his total possessions, had seen a good deal of service before he was captured during Coote's campaign of 1781, but he was still only twenty-four when, to his extreme terror, he fell into the hands of Haidar Ali.

Broadly speaking, they tell the same sort of story, in which attempts by renegades such as Sergeant Dempster (of Bristow's own regiment) to win them over are swiftly followed by what they allege to be a forcible ceremony of circumcision. Scurry's account is perhaps the most factual. He relates how twelve 'robust' barbers tried to shave the victims' heads and then they were all given a dose of bhang (he calls it majum) which was meant to deaden pain. Next,

A mat and a kind of sheet, being provided for each of us, we were ordered to arrange ourselves in two rows, and then lie down on our mats. This being done, the guards, barbers and those twelve men before mentioned came among us, and seizing the youngest, Randal Cadman, a midshipman, they placed him on a cudgere pot, when four of these stout men held his legs and arms, while the barber performed his office.

In this manner they went through the operation, and in two hours the *pious* work was finished, and we were laid on our separate mats; where, with the effect of the majum some were laughing and others crying; which, together with the pain, made our condition truly curious and ludicrous.

Scurry says they all got well except two—one, James Murrell, who died and the other, named Alsop, who 'from the great quantity of blood he lost, never had any colour in his face afterwards'.

Later came ablutions in enormous coppers, from which several youngsters jumped out half-scalded and scampered off, and a scene of hide-and-seek followed which rather spoilt the stateliness of the ritual. They were given Moslem dress, slave rings were put in their ears, and they were all set to drill in 'chela' companies under European renegades. The older ones were trained as quickly as possible to become N.C.O.s in such companies themselves, while the younger were turned into palace servants or even dancing boys. One of these was Midshipman Cadman, but he proved refractory, and was sent back to the chelas in disgrace. He

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escaped during Cornwallis's attack on Seringapatam. The Governor-General himself took an interest in his fate, and in his kindly way wrote to Sir Charles Oakeley at Madras on April 11th 1792:

Mr. Cadman, who was a midshipman in the *Resolution* and sent when quite a boy to Tipu, is now on his way to Madras. His health is ruined by the cruel treatment he has received, and his mind is supposed to be weakened if not deranged. I should be obliged if consideration could be given to his helpless state.

One of the worst ordeals suffered by these wretched youths was to be paraded in front of the officers' prisons. Lindsay could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw them, and to Baird's horror some of his own men could be identified in the ranks. His biographer adds:

He was observed by some of the poor fellows peeping through the grate of his dungeon, and overcome by the sight of their much loved officer they rushed from the ranks and called out to him 'Captain Baird, rely on us, this is not our fault!' and wept bitterly.¹

The sequel was a round robin to Colonel Baillie from twenty-two men of Baird's, Lindsay's and other companies, piteously recounting much the same tale as Scurry's.

However, the attitude of some of the older converts was more robust. Bristow tells some very odd stories indeed. Quite early in their career as compulsory Moslems he and his mates took to catching dogs and bandicoots (large, ratlike animals) and circumcising them publicly. He naïvely remarks that this never failed to exasperate their tormentors and brought them additional ill-usage—but he has the grace to add that such pranks would be unpardonable if their own treatment had not been equally barbarous. Another time, a conspiracy was got up to steal votive silver hands offered at the shrines during the Moharram festival. The first raider came back with a dozen of these valuable little objects, which were then melted down on the quiet, but there was no opportunity to repeat a success which, says Bristow, he 'never could sufficiently admire, as mere despair inspired the attempt'.

In fact, the Mysoreans seem to have been somewhat afraid of their roughneck converts who, when a dozen or fifteen of them got together, thought nothing of 'beating the whole battalion, guards and all, out of the square'. After one such incident when they

¹ Hook, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 49.

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were with the Coorgs they were split up, two parties being sent off to Malabar Christian battalions and one to the Moplahs.

The crisis in the affairs of Bristow, Scurry and their like was of course when the Treaty of Mangalore led to the release of virtually all the non-collaborating prisoners of war. After a period of despair, when they first realised that they were going to be left in Tipu's hands, they seem to have settled down more or less resignedly to the lives of European mercenaries, such as abounded in every Indian army of the time. If Scurry is to be believed, they were even fitted out with wives. When told that this was about to happen they were 'extremely sorry', but there was nothing for it. The English youths were lined up and behind them was marshalled a corresponding row of girls shipped in from the Carnatic and few of them more than eleven years of age:

At last the durga gave the word, 'To the right about face'; with the addition (in the Moorish language) of 'Take what is before you'. This, when it was understood, some did, and some did not; but the refractory were soon obliged to comply . . . each being by this means supplied with a piece of furniture for which, however valuable in general, we had neither want or inclination.

There was a further scene of comedy when in the course of marching back to barracks, the brides got mixed up and nobody was sure who was whose. However, Scurry did quite well for himself with 'an affectionate creature' by whom he had two children; one of these died young, but he had sadly to leave the second with its mother when he finally succeeded in escaping.

There were, as might be expected, few officers among the converted. Two who appear in all the narratives are Lieutenants James Speediman and Richard Rutledge, of the Royal Artillery. Lindsay and his friends saw them on parade in November 1782 and shortly afterwards got the usual deprecatory, imploring letter. The two men explained how, after being captured near Vellore, they were marched to Seringapatam and instead of being put with their fellow-officers were taken to another building where they found nine Europeans who had already been made Moslems. Under threats, Speediman and Rutledge submitted to the same treatment. They were then set to drill chelas.

Later news of the two gunner officers is confused. Bristow reports them, in about February 1783, as in heavy irons at Shahr

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Ganjam, after an attempt to escape had been detected. When the peace of 1784 was declared they were treated in the same way as many of the other European converts—hurried away out of sight while the general release of prisoners of war was being set in motion. According to Scurry, Speediman cut his throat at Mysore, but Rutledge survived to become involved (innocently or otherwise) in a suspected conspiracy against Tipu in 1788. He was then taken to Nandidrug and murdered. It was only in the following year, apparently, that the fact of his retention as a prisoner became known in Madras, but even if he had still been alive the request which was made for his release would certainly have been useless.

Another young officer to give way to persuasions or threats was a certain Ensign Clarke. A long exculpatory letter from him (reprinted by the 'Officer') explains how he arrived at Madras in January 1781, was highly thought of by General Munro, was captured at Pondicherry and 'made a Mussulman' three months later. For some reason he was housed with the privates and complained bitterly of their 'rascally usage' towards him. However, in Bristow, we find him 'standing speaker' for them in a deputation to the Killedar and being the first to be flogged, for his pains. Later (in about 1784, it would seem) he received another of the frightful floggings with which the narratives abound; his body turned black and he died.

Finally, a line of commiseration for a certain Mr. Bunberry (rank not stated, but evidently an officer). Writing to Malet about the cruel fate of certain prisoners (including Speediman and Rutledge), Dr. Little, surgeon with his namesake Captain Little's detachment, mentions 'Bunberry is dead':

He had taken a fancy for some girl whom he had deluded away from her parents. They complained to the Nabob, Bunberry was sent for, he said he would change his religion, and marry her. Tippoo was satisfied, so the matter ended.¹

Except that, in some unspecified manner, Bunberry died. . . .

The narratives normally end with the release of the prisoners of war under treaty, or the escape of the apostates. But before they

¹ *The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, pp. 475-6.

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all disappear to the Coast and thence to their native land, they deserve our thanks for many a vivid picture of Seringapatam in Tipu's time. Lindsay, though fettered, managed to remove a tile from the roof of his prison and thus secured a peephole. Here is one of his snapshots:

Tuesday—Get up in the morning at the usual time—go through the usual ceremonies—look out at my peep-hole—see a vast number of Brahmin girls going down to the river to wash—four or five hundred horse pass by, guarding a multitude of the Carnatic inhabitants—a Moorman of high family, celebrating his marriage, passes by in great state and his wife in a covered palanquin—two old Moormen under the house, scolding—a crowd of people around them to whom they are telling their story—shut my tile for fear they should look up and observe me—to-day curry and rice for my dinner—and plenty of it, as C—my messmate had got the gripes and cannot eat his allowance. . . .

Less happily, they hear and see the celebrations for Tipu's successive victories—notably those over Brathwaite and Mathews, which successively dash their hopes of early rescue. Scurry, on the other hand, specialises in the picturesque and horrific. Even the sports he watches include bloodstained combats between gladiators armed with steel talons, and the (reluctant) trampling of tigers by elephants. He is also strong, of course, on tortures and executions, and we owe to him a description of one of Tipu's more gruesome mechanical devices:

Amongst numerous other instruments he had a wooden horse of a full size, resembling those adopted for his cavalry . . . on the saddle of which were nine rows of sharp spikes, about three quarters of an inch long. The machine was moved by springs; and as soon as the victim mounted, the horse, by some mechanism, would rear on his hind legs and then falling with a jerk on his fore feet, the spikes would enter into the posteriors of the rider. The time of riding was proportioned to the crime, though it was said that one of the horsemen rode this machine with such dexterity as to avoid the spikes—in consequence of which he was pardoned.

Scurry admits that he never saw this murderous steed in action, and one might well dismiss it (like the tigers that devoured the

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Inchallah and the Buxey in Chapter 8) as one of his cheerful fabrications, only that—supposing it had been Scurry who had assured us that Tipu Sultan owned a life-size wooden tiger with a European in its grip and an apparatus inside it that growled . . . ?

The escape stories are all splendid, and Bristow's in particular deserves far more space than I can give it. In September 1790, when the Army of the South was still threatening Mysore, there was a general dispersal of converts to the droogs—Bristow was in a party who were sent to 'Outradroog' (Hutridurga). They travelled barefoot and in irons, and were quite sure they were going to be murdered. Throughout their stay they were given no rations, being only kept alive by the compassion of the local Hindus.

Early in November it was decided to attempt a break-out, and then we see deployed the full repertoire of the escaping P.O.W.—the saw made from an old knife and the leg-irons partially cut through—the twenty days of digging by night and even (under cover of a sing-song) by day—the tunnel at last achieved—the climb over the outer wall while the sentries are smoking—the hair-raising tumble down the precipice below as the trumpets and tom-toms sound the alarm. There followed days and weeks of wandering and starving, but Bristow (who had become separated from his companions) always managed to make ground north-eastwards, in the hope of falling in with the Marathas, which he finally did early in February, not far from Koppal. A reinstated poligar ('the Nalputty Rajah') took pity on him, and on the 15th he had the bliss of being escorted to Koppal and being handed over to Captain Read's detachment, then prosecuting the siege in conjunction with the Nizam.

Bristow's perils were not quite finished, however. Having got down to Masulipatam, he took ship for Madras. They were in sight of port when a hurricane blew them out to sea again and for thirty-six days they had to subsist on 'a seer of bad rice, a few salted onions and half a pint of water per day', in a ship which they expected to founder at any moment. At last, on June 11th, 1791, James Bristow landed at Fort William, 'after an absence of ten years and eight months; three months and twenty-five days of which had been spent in the service of my country, partly as a prisoner of war, and partly as a captive retained in defiance of faith and the law of nations'.

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Scurry had the parallel experience of escaping from a droog (Chitaldrug in his case) and making his way to the other English detachment with an allied army, Captain Little's, then conducting minor operations in the area under Parashuram Bhau. He was one of a party of five—two midshipmen, William Drake and William Whiteway, and three seamen, John Wood, John Jordan and Scurry himself. Their arrival at the Bombay detachment's hospital at Hurrihur on the south bank of the Tungabhadra, on August 31st, 1791, is vouched for in the same letter from Dr. Little to Malet which I quoted a few pages back. There are discrepancies between Little's report on how they managed to get away from Chitaldrug, and Scurry's own story, but it is clear that it was a question of armed men absconding from their unit and not of a break-out of prisoners, as at Hutridurga.

'In defiance of faith and of the law of nations': that is what Bristow believed, and that was the English indictment of Tipu, from the Treaty of Mangalore until the day of his death. Yet if my thesis is correct—that Tipu regarded the converted as his subjects and not as prisoners of war—it is difficult to point to any instance where he knowingly detained officers or men whom, as he saw the matter, he was under an obligation to release. The English would never believe this, and in truth the fact that a man called, say, William Lee, had been circumcised, accepted as some sort of Moslem, given the name of Dellawar Beg and enrolled in Daud Khan's cushoon did not make him any less a 'captive of Tipu'. The Treaty of Mangalore had left our people with an uneasy conscience; they felt they had conceded too much too easily, and so—on flimsy enough evidence—they convinced themselves that they were letting the Mysoreans get away with shocking crimes against their prisoners of war.

A letter from Cornwallis to Dundas of November 7th, 1789, is very revealing psychologically. 'It may be inhuman,' he says, 'to find fault with the Duke of Dorset's appeal to M. de Luzerne [the French Minister of Marine] to intercede with Tipu to release our prisoners, but it was a very humiliating and impolitic step, for we admit by it that we know he has not on his part executed the last treaty of peace, and it cannot but lower us exceedingly in his

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estimation to observe that we cannot resent it.' After the victory at Seringapatam, Cornwallis's suspicions were fanned by the lists of alleged prisoners still in Tipu's hands which were produced by various escapers, but a large proportion of these were—like the thirty men found and released at Shahr Ganjam during the battle—either deserters or free-lance technicians who had more or less voluntarily taken service with Tipu. Attempts to nail the latter down by reference to specific cases were evaded, blandly by Tipu himself, with more warmth by his vakils:

You are pleased to write that several people are still confined. If among the supposed prisoners there is one of any rank or station whatever, it would be surprising that he should have been detained, and that you should have applied for him. If any one had been overlooked either by neglect or from his low rank, and should have some time after made his escape from hence, and influenced by hatred and bitterness, which belong to prisoners, should report stories that are without foundation to the English gentlemen, their reports are not worthy of credit.¹

So the wrangle continued. Indeed, it never was (and, for the reasons I have given, never could be) completely resolved, but it has caused a special disrepute to cling to Tipu's name until our own time.

Meanwhile the prisoners who did straggle back to British India experienced the usual fate of 'odd men out' at the hands of the bureaucracy. Witness the plaintive petition of five *Hannibal* men including 'James Curry' (the officials never could get Scurry's name right), awaiting passage to England in the *Dutton* in April 1792. They would be arriving, they pointed out, in the coldest season of the year, and Lord Cornwallis had ordered they should be given every assistance, but the £5 each granted them to buy warm clothing had gone but a small way. And what could they do for themselves out of a subsistence allowance of '3 single fanams' a day? The Madras Council no doubt felt it was being munificent when it authorised an additional grant of £2 per head to these much-tried mariners.

¹ The vakils to G. F. Cherry (Secretary to Lord Cornwallis), Feb. 11th, 1793 (*The Allies' War with Tipu Sultan*, p. 625).

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ALL this time, beyond Mysore's contracted frontiers, the eternal square dance of South Indian politics continued. The only deviation from normal was that for the moment the active performers were the Marathas and the Nizam, while Tipu and the English stood on the sidelines, getting their breath back. This did not mean (as we shall see) that the former was reconciled to his defeat, still less was there an assumption by the latter that their vigilant gaze towards the Ghats could be relaxed. Cornwallis had hoped—though he was quickly disillusioned—to place the Triple Alliance on a lasting basis, to give reality in fact to the clause in the Treaties of 1790 which declared that 'if after the conclusion of peace with Tippoo, he should molest or attack either of the contracting parties, the others shall join to punish him; the mode and conditions of affecting which shall be hereafter settled by the three contracting parties'. But this remained a pious hope. The Marathas would have none of it. In the first place, Nana Fadnavis was only interested in getting an English subsidiary force to fight his battles against the rising power of Scindhia; in the second, the Marathas as a whole had no wish to perpetuate any kind of English guarantee to Hyderabad, which they had every intention of attacking.

By contrast the Nizam, conscious of his pitiful weakness in the face of such threats, clung to the English, and tried to insist that they should support him against all third parties. For he was not at odds with the Marathas only—there was an argument going on over the region of Kurnool, which he considered should have been yielded to him by Tipu under the Treaty of Seringapatam. Cornwallis, in some of his last letters to both sides, made it clear that he was not going to back the Nizam's claim, and his successor Sir John Shore (a neutralist to his bones) took the same line. Result: no change in the status of Kurnool.

Maratha-Nizam affairs really began to warm up after the arrival at Poona in June 1792 of the great Mahadji Scindhia, fresh from his Central Indian conquests. This was a gain for Tipu, because

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Scindhia had never shown any particular animosity towards him, and according to Grant Duff, they now began an amicable correspondence which continued until Scindhia's death early in 1794.¹ The following year, the long-expected war between the Marathas and Hyderabad broke out. Huge armies gathered on each side, and on March 11th–12th, 1795, they clashed at Kharda, inside Hyderabad territory. After a struggle in which the number of casualties bore no relation to the scenes of panic and confusion on both sides, the Nizam's armies fled the field, and he had to accept a damaging peace.

An important result of this affair was an increase in French influence at Hyderabad. As soon as he realised that the English were not going to back him against the Marathas, the Nizam had begun to expand his existing small force of Europeans officered by Frenchmen. The chief of these was a deserter from Mysore called Raymond, who had already held an important command against his old employers during the Third Mysore War. At Kharda his force numbered twenty-three battalions, and if he had been given a free hand he might well have won the day for the Nizam.

Up till that time the latter still had, in addition, his English detachment of two battalions. They did not fight at Kharda but were employed on what Shore called 'disgraceful and delicate service' elsewhere—no doubt the same as that to which Wellesley would apply the identical phrase three years later, '*disgraceful services against petty renters and Zemindars*' (Wellesley to Captain Kirkpatrick, July 14th, 1798). The Nizam now dismissed this force, and encouraged Raymond to gather recruits and equipment. Shore took the matter very calmly, but realised the danger when Raymond was given the jagir of Cuddapah, which had been ceded by Tipu under the Treaty of Seringapatam. It was threateningly close to the Carnatic border and less than 100 miles from the sea.

For now a new element had come into the situation. From the Fall of the Bastille on July 14th, 1789, to the guillotining of Robespierre on July 28th, 1794, the French Revolution had

¹ He was succeeded by his adopted son, Daulat Rao Scindhia. James Grant Duff's famous *History of the Mahrattas* (London, Longmans) appeared in 1826. See Vol. III, p. 108, for a mention of Tipu-Scindhia contacts, which are also dealt with at large in Chap. 7 of R. D. Choksey's *History of British Diplomacy at the Court of the Peshwas* (Poona, Choksey, 1951).

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steadily gained in momentum, while France herself fought a series of successful wars against the European powers which took up the cause of the *émigrés*. This of course brought about a richly confused situation overseas. At the battle of Kharda there was the fantastic scene of Scindhia's forces, commanded by his famous general De Boigne, advancing under the white cross of royalist Savoy, while Raymond's corps defied them beneath the tricolor and the *bonnet rouge*.

As already noticed, the outbreak of war between France and England early in 1793 had led to Cornwallis's successful attack on Pondicherry, and at the moment when Raymond seemed about to set up a military headquarters at Cuddapah, it was fully expected that he might be joined by regular forces from metropolitan France. Shore protested to Hyderabad, but the strained situation was eased by a timely display of English aid when the Nizam was threatened by the revolt of his son Ali Jah (July 1795). As a result, the English subsidiary force was reinstated.

Tipu, for his part, was quite prepared to take a hand if he saw any chance of making himself, rather than the Marathas, the dominant force in Hyderabad. At the time of Ali Jah's rebellion he ominously massed troops at Gooty, near the frontier, but when the affair fizzled out he dispersed them. This did not prevent him from opening talks with the Nizam about an alliance, though he was frustrated by the renewed influence of the English, as exerted by their extremely shrewd resident, Major Kirkpatrick.¹ Meanwhile Maratha pressure on the Nizam was temporarily eased by the death of the Peshwa,² and a consequent internal struggle of fearsome complexity, the details of which we can thankfully omit.

The current Governor-General certainly had no wish to be

¹ The Kirkpatricks are confusing. This one, William, usually known as Colonel Kirkpatrick, took over from Kennaway at Hyderabad in 1794 and remained there until September 1798, when as the result of meeting Lord Mornington at the Cape of Good Hope (see p. 000), he joined the Governor-General's staff as Political Secretary. He was succeeded by his brother, Captain James Achilles Kirkpatrick, who was to render important services before and during the Fourth Mysore War. It was Colonel William Kirkpatrick who translated Tipu's letters.

² Resenting the unrelaxed tutelage of Nana Fadnavis, the young Peshwa, now twenty-one years of age, threw himself out of a window on October 25th, 1795. That at least is the usual story, though some authorities now think his death was accidental.

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involved. Sir John Shore, crouched for ever at his desk with the towering figures of Cornwallis and Wellesley on either side, inevitably reminds one of Lord Goderich, that 'transient embarrassed phantom' between Canning and Wellington. Of course he was far more than that, but I am afraid he must in these pages suffer his usual fate of being glanced at, summed up and gently returned to obscurity. The only questions which really concern us about his administration are the extent to which—if at all—it contributed to Tipu Sultan's final tragedy, and whether the latter might have been averted if Shore had been a more forceful Governors-General or, conversely, had been followed by one of his own stamp.

The 'great man' theory of history remains hopelessly out of fashion, but I do not think that its most ruthless demolishers could deny that the personalities of the Governors-General have had fateful effects on Indian history, in its British phase. John Shore was an evangelical Christian first, an organisation man second, and a policy-maker only third. Temperamentally, he deeply preferred that nothing should happen, and that the burden of decision on himself would thereby be lightened. What a genuine ring has the *cri de cœur* in one of his letters to Charles Grant (March 9th, 1796):

Often have I wished that Lord Cornwallis were at the head of the administration here, and that I were his co-adjutor, as formerly; all would then have been easy for him and me.

And later in the same letter:

The only intervals allowed me for reading and reflection are during the operations of my hair-dresser, or in the evening, previous to my sleep; in these intervals, however, I have contrived to read the New Testament through many times, Warburton's Divine Legation, Jortin's Ecclesiastical History, Jortin's Sermons over and over, Paley's Evidences, and many other books of a similar nature.¹

From not wanting things to happen, it is only a step to believing they have not happened when they have. That is the accusation constantly brought against Shore—that he shut his eyes to

¹ *Memoir of the Life and Correspondence of John, Lord Teignmouth*, by his son, the 2nd Baron (London, Hatchard, 1843), p. 363. Shore accepted—how characteristically!—the *Irish* barony of Teignmouth in 1797.

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awkward facts and was lucky to get out before the consequences came home to roost. To Furber,¹ it is incredible that he was given the job at all—he thinks that Pitt and Dundas broke their rule of ‘appointing none but military men to the highest posts in India’ because they could find no one else. But the ‘rule’, as we have seen, was of very recent date, and Furber admits that only by hindsight can we argue that, with the great wars of Europe looming up, a soldier rather than a revenue expert should have been sent to India in 1793.

If one looks calmly at the facts, it is extremely hard to say what would have been gained if Cornwallis had been followed immediately by an expansionist like Wellesley, or an ambitious fire-eater like Lord Hobart, who in 1794 came out as Governor of Madras with the reversion of the Governor-Generalship after Shore.² So far as Tipu is concerned, it is possible of course that the knowledge that there was a strong hand at the centre might have deterred him from certain of the steps which were already leading him towards ruin, but the blind fatalism he seemed to show even after Wellesley had taken over and had turned the full force of his personality on Mysore affairs, makes this somewhat unlikely.

Certainly Shore cannot be accused of discounting what he himself called the ‘ever-to-be suspected enmity of Tipu’. On September 9th, 1796, he told Dundas that the Nizam’s most influential counsellors were trying to persuade him to break with the Company and to ally himself with Tipu, while the latter was getting his forces prepared for co-operation with ‘a European enemy’. Shore in fact was convinced that given the help either of the French or of the Nizam, Tipu would attack the Company, ‘nor am I confident that he will not attempt it unsupported’.

Shortly after this there were rumours of the approach of a combined French and Dutch fleet and the Governor-General took energetic steps:

¹ Holden Furber, *Private Record of an Indian Governor-Generalship* (Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 6.

² He lost his chance by developing a sort of persecution mania about Shore and writing almost hysterical letters against him to Dundas. In the end both men went home at about the same time. As the Earl of Buckinghamshire, Hobart became President of the Board of Control in 1812, and was able to indulge his long-nursed resentment that the Directors of the I.E.I.C. supported Shore against him. They were relieved of his ill-humour only when he was killed by a fall from his horse in St. James’s park in February 1816.

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He instructed Lord Hobart to prepare his troops for taking the field at the shortest notice; assembled a force on the frontier of the Bengal Presidency ready to advance on the Carnatic, and authorised the Governor of Bombay not only to adopt defensive measures on the Malabar Coast, but to pursue the enemy into Tippoo's territories, should they land in that quarter.¹

In the event, the French fleet never arrived, the Dutch was captured by Admiral Elphinstone, and the situation generally simmered down.

Shore's anxieties—and perhaps his defensive measures—might have been heightened if he had known that his 'ever-to-be-suspected' enemy, while abstaining from overt aggression for the time being, had not lost a moment since his defeat in chasing his old will-o'-the-wisp, a military alliance with France. Historians have been equally in the dark about this, and it has sometimes been argued that there was no direct contact between Mysore and metropolitan France, or even Mauritius, during the period 1793–7. But in the Russian *Central Asian Review* (Vol. 1, No. 2) for 1963 there was published a translation by K. A. Antonova of a remarkable series of documents² which, if genuine (and there seems no good reason to doubt this), prove that Tipu was not merely meditating revenge on the English at this time—he was actively planning it.

As a first step, immediately after his 1792 disaster, he sent an emissary to Mauritius with a letter for Louis XVI, proposing an offensive and defensive alliance. By the time this missive got to Paris the royal government was no more, and on March 27th, 1793, its successors, assuming that Tipu would not be interested in dealing with them, decided to take the matter of the alliance no further.

Tipu's next *démarche* was in June 1795. At his request his old envoy Pierre Monneron went to see D. C. Cossigny (formerly Governor of Pondicherry but now in Mauritius), and his brother, Jacques, and brought back to Seringapatam letters from them paying tribute to Tipu's greatness, assuring him of their sincerity, and so on.

¹ *Memoir*, p. 381.

² The documents were bought by a Russian collector, N. P. Likhechev, at a Paris auction before World War I. They were transferred to the Archaeographic Institute in 1917, and have been in the Moscow Institute of History since 1936.

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This was encouragement, and Tipu got to work on a draft Treaty of Alliance, which Monneron translated from the Persian. It was signed by Tipu about a year later (July 1796) and sent off to Paris in the care of one of the French naval commanders in the East, Rear-Admiral Sercey.

It is a truly extraordinary document, and throws a lurid light on the author's mental processes at that time. Its main provisions are these:

1. The French are to send 10,000 troops to attack Tellicherry. After burning it they are to join forces with the Mysoreans and (with Tipu in supreme command) march in turn on Cochin, Madura, Trichinopoly, and Tanjore.

2. With these places firmly in their hands, there is to be a joint advance on Pondicherry and Madras, and thence by land to capture Calcutta. From there follows a sweep across the sub-Continent to Bombay which, says Tipu, the French may have for their own!

3. Tipu on his side promises to provide 5,000 troops to every 1,000 French. But he stipulates that his name must appear as their ally in any future peace treaty between France and England, and because he has been 'unable to take any revenge upon the English', such a treaty must stipulate that Great Britain must return his territory and pay him 300 lakhs of rupees.

In forwarding the draft, the Cossigny brothers and Monneron added a favourable covering note. They thought it unlikely that Britain would send any more troops to the East as long as she was anxious about affairs in Europe, and meanwhile her forces in India (estimated at 12,000 Europeans and up to 40,000 Sepoys) were busy attacking the Dutch possessions.¹ Tipu, on the other hand, had 90,000 to 100,000 infantry, well trained, well clothed and well equipped. The writers also pointed out that 'the islands' (Mauritius and Réunion) were in a state of revolt and would not be suitable as a port of call for the proposed expedition. So why not seize the Cape of Good Hope on the way, and use that? The islands could be pacified later. Reservations were expressed about Tipu's taking full command and about the amount of treasure to be handed over to him, but no doubt he would yield to pressure on such points.

¹ This relates to the seizure of Ceylon and the expedition against Malacca and Amboyna successfully organised by Hobart in 1795.

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One of Tipu's stipulations in making this approach had been that the strictest secrecy should be observed over the whole affair, and no record exists of when the French Government actually received the document, or what was its reaction to it. But it is clear that the much more public exchanges of 1797, which were to lead the story of Tipu and the English towards its climax and its close, were no sudden wild attempt to jerk the French into action, but just an extra tug at a rope which the ruler of Mysore had never let go.

He was also, however, looking for allies nearer home. Early in 1796, with his unlucky gift for jabbing the English in sensitive spots, he sent an elaborate embassy to Zaman Shah, ruler of Afghanistan. Now next to the French—and Tipu himself—there was no power about which the government of British India felt more uneasy. Zaman Shah had been launching regular autumnal invasions of north-west Hindustan since 1793, and though he always returned home without having done much damage, he was too close to the pattern of the historic conquerors from Central Asia to be casually dismissed.

Tipu's ambassadors were told to proceed discreetly, in the guise of a commercial mission interested mainly in horses, to Kutch and Karachi, whence they were to make their way via Baluchistan to Kabul. There they were to put forward verbally a joint plan which, as Tipu wrote to Zaman Shah later,¹ would 'carry on the holy war against the infidel and free the region of Hindustan from the contamination of the enemies of our religion'. The strategy proposed was as buoyant and insubstantial as for the French invasion of South India. The expulsion of the Marathas from Delhi and the setting up of a puppet ruler in place of

¹ Tipu Sultan to Zaman Shah (draft), Feb. 5th, 1797. Part of the extensive correspondence between the two rulers, discovered after the fall of Seringapatam, appears in Paper A, Items 21 to 29, in the *Official Documents Relating to the Negotiations carried on by Tippoo Sultan with the French Nation*, printed by order of the Governor-General-in-Council (Calcutta, 1799). For these key documents, from which the present chapter largely derives, see p. 363.

The brief to the ambassadors (Item 21) is dated March 1796. It is, as usual, governernessy on points of detail. 'If it should be customary to sit down after waiting a little and receiving the instructions of the Vizier, you will do so; should it, however, be customary to stand up, you will remain standing . . .' It ought to be added that the commercial aspect of the mission was not altogether a blind—steps were to be taken to establish a 'factory' at Karachi.

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the blind Shah Alam II was to take one year; another would suffice for the Deccan to be over-run by an Afghan army from the north and a Mysorean from the south; after that the destruction of the remaining infidels—presumably the English—would be a comparatively simple matter.

Though the mission went through smoothly, and the ambassadors returned with ornate promises of friendship, the results were no more tangible than in Tipu's earlier *démarches* to potentates abroad. Zaman Shah continued his programme of annual incursions, and managed to cause a considerable panic by capturing Lahore just when the Fourth Mysore War was brewing (December 1798), but domestic treason called him home within a few weeks. Sir John Shore, characteristically, was among those who never thought much of the Zaman Shah menace, though he took sensible measures whenever it loomed up. A letter he wrote to Dundas just before setting off on a trip to Lucknow (January 27th, 1797) sums up his views:

He (the Nawab of Oudh) has earnestly solicited me to meet him, alarmed probably by an apprehension of the approach of Zaman Shah. I cannot yet bring my mind to entertain any fears on this account, but I have taken the same precautions as if I was morally certain of the Shah's approach. If he should reach Delhi, he can have no motive but the plunder of Lucknow . . . It has also been suggested that the Shah acts in concert with Tippoo and by French intrigues; I am equally an infidel on this point, but at the same time aware of the influence which his success might have on the resolutions of Tippoo and the politics of the Nizam.¹

Fifteen thousand troops were accordingly stationed along the northern borders until the close of that particular Zaman Shah season.

In a further attempt to bring the leaders of Islam into concert, Tipu despatched envoys with rich gifts to the Shah of Persia. The latter responded with a return embassy to the Mysorean court, but by the time it arrived, Seringapatam had fallen. It needs to be considered that ever since 1792 any power, whether inside the borders of India or beyond, must have received the overtures of Tipu Sultan as coming from a man who had been beaten in battle

¹ Furber, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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and stripped of half his territory—an even less attractive ally than in the days of the abortive 1786–7 missions to the Caliph and to France.

As it turned out, it was with a representative of the latter that Tipu was to achieve his sole success in obtaining military help from overseas, however weak in numbers and disastrous in its political effects. But before embarking on the celebrated ‘Malartic affair’ we must jump forward a few months to join in the general welcome to a new Governor-General.

The process of choosing a successor to Sir John Shore had taken the usual winding course and had involved, not for the last time, that faithful but reluctant wheelhorse, the Marquess Cornwallis. Throughout Shore’s term of office, delays in implementing the military reforms which Cornwallis himself had planned, but which had been diluted by Dundas and the Company, had caused serious unrest in the Indian army. Now Bengal seemed on the verge of mutiny. Putting this right was a job for a soldier and, with Hobart safely side-tracked, Cornwallis was sworn in on February 1st, 1797, for a second, limited term as Governor-General.¹ But from the start there seems to have been a doubt whether he would ever set sail. He was still in England when, on April 15th at Portsmouth, there began the series of Fleet mutinies which seemed to expose our shores to a French invasion, and the Governor-General-elect felt he might be needed on the home front.

Then on May 23rd the Marquess Camden, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland (where even more menacing troubles were boiling up), wrote to Cornwallis that he had heard it was ‘not impossible’ that he might accept command of the troops there, though not the Lord-Lieutenancy. We do not know what was the reply, but as the summer went on Cornwallis became more and more disenchanted with the Government’s weakness over the Bengal mutiny issue. In July he resigned—and, to his bitter regret, took over the command-in-chief *and* the lord-lieutenancy of Ireland!

¹ Dundas suggested that he need sacrifice no more than a year of ‘the comforts of home’, spending three months in Calcutta and three in Madras and returning in ‘the same ship of war that would carry you out’. (Cornwallis, *Correspondence*, Vol. II, letter of Jan. 19th, 1797). But one must regard this as bait.

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Meanwhile Hobart's Madras Governorship, together with his reversion to the supreme post, had been accepted by a young member of the Board of Control, Richard Wellesley, 2nd Earl of Mornington,¹ subject to his boss being Cornwallis and none other. All this now had to be re-shaped, and on November 9th, 1797, Wellesley sailed for India as Governor-General.

From now onwards the difficulty is going to be to prevent him from, so to speak, bursting the boundaries of this book! Within a year of his landing at Calcutta in the first week of May 1798, Tipu Sultan was dead; two months more and the State of Mysore had been recast in a mould which has only been broken in our own day. So Richard Wellesley belongs only to the brief, final phase of Tipu's career. But even in that short time the characteristics, for good and ill, of a tremendous Governor-Generalship are fully deployed, and the small figure at the centre of it impels one's attention and, to a singular degree, extorts one's partisanship, or the reverse. Yet the documentation on Wellesley is so vast that a worthwhile assessment of him could only be made at the end of a study lasting several years, which nobody so far has undertaken; the duty of the lesser historian is to view him in a particular context and to avoid sweeping judgements.

Wellesley arrived in India a Governor-General fully armed, fully briefed. Some marvelled—as they were intended to—at the completeness of his information, but we have already had a hint of how part of it at least was acquired. Those few weeks spent at the Cape of Good Hope on the outward voyage were not wasted. Lady Anne Barnard cast an amused eye:

He has a levee every morning of yellow generals and captains from India with despatches for Government, who stop here, and finding His Excellency at the Cape, deliver up their official papers, which he opens, peruses and by such means will arrive instructed on the present position of affairs there, and will appear a prodigy of ability in being master of all so soon after his arrival.²

¹ The story of his early years as the spoilt and at first unambitious son of a glee-composing Irish peer is excellently told by his nineteenth-century biographer, W. M. Torrens, M.P., in *The Marquess Wellesley, Architect of Empire* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1880). Though Wellesley was, throughout his 'Tipu' period, Earl of Mornington, I propose to follow universal custom in calling him by his surname, which afterwards became his title.

² *Lives of the Lindsays*, Vol. III, p. 399 *et seq.*

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Apart from this interception of dispatches (explained in stately terms to Dundas and the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors) Wellesley had the advantage of long conclaves with a yellow major—William Kirkpatrick, who happened to be at the Cape on sick leave. Then, of course, there was Macartney himself, 'wary, well-bred and witty', to add his quota of Indian experience, while a more recent Governor of Madras, Lord Hobart, pausing en route to England, no doubt gave up to his supplanter in the supreme post such time as he could spare from repaying the amorous attentions of one of the Cape 'Misses'. And so it came about that the first of the copious and masterly *Despatches of the Marquess Wellesley*,¹ printed by Martin, on such topics as Raymond's forces at Hyderabad and the movements of Zaman Shah, is datelined 'Cape of Good Hope, 23 Feb. 1798', before the Governor-General had ever stepped upon Indian soil.

A theme which was only lightly touched upon in what Wellesley proudly designated 'Letter No. 1' was the policy to be pursued with Tipu Sultan. But writing to Dundas five days later he goes into the position carefully and concludes that Tipu has 'gained rather than lost weight' in recent years, mainly through his intercourse with neighbouring courts and in particular with Zaman Shah. A perverse view, perhaps, but a hint of the way his mind was already tending. His conclusion is:

that as on the one hand we ought never to use any high language towards Tippoo, nor ever attempt to deny him the smallest point of his just rights, so on the other, where we have distinct proofs of his machinations against us, we ought to let him know that his treachery does not escape our observations, and to make him feel that he is within reach of our vigilance. At present it appears to me that he is permitted to excite ill-will against us wherever he pleases, without the least attempt on our part to reprehend either him for the suggestion, or the Court to whom he applies, for listening to it.

Unlike Cornwallis, Wellesley did not have to wait three years for a 'distinct proof' of Tipu's aggressive designs; one was placed

¹ All Wellesley letters and minutes come from this source, unless otherwise stated. When the *Despatches* belatedly appeared in 1836, under the editorship of Montgomery Martin (London, W. H. Allen), they caused a surge of interest in Wellesley's achievements.

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before him within a few weeks of taking up his government. The 'machination' in question went back in fact to the month of February 1797, when a French privateer, dismasted, put in at Mangalore. Its commander, a man called François Ripaud, got in touch with the Senior Naval Officer at the port, who turned out to be none other than Ghulam Ali, whom we last observed listening to Mr. Millingchamp's sermon from the Corporation Pew at Madras. Just what were the qualifications of this crippled¹ diplomat for the post of S.N.O. is beyond conjecture, but as we have seen in the case of Lutf Ali Beg, the few men whom Tipu trusted had to turn their hands to everything.

And so, exerting his modest command of the French language, Ghulam Ali listened to Ripaud's tale. This was, that he was the Second-in-Command at Mauritius, and had been authorised to discuss Mysorean co-operation with a French force already assembled there for the expulsion of the English from India. Ghulam Ali, impressed, conducted Ripaud to Seringapatam, where he was favoured with long interviews with Tipu Sultan himself. The latter has been mocked for taking Ripaud seriously and Mohibbul Hasan uses the improbability of his story as a reason for dismissing the whole Ripaud episode as largely fiction.² Yet from what we now know of Tipu's approaches to France in 1795, it need not have seemed by any means unlikely that the Directory had taken him at his word and despatched troops to Mauritius, but had failed to inform him of the fact till now.

Before announcing how he intended to react to this embassy, Tipu followed his usual practice of taking the opinions of his principal officers in writing.³ This did not indicate a rudimentary Cabinet system of collective decision-making, since the normal result seems to have been a sycophantic confirmation of what was already known to be in the ruler's mind. But in the present case

¹ The writer of the 'puff' for Mather Brown's picture of the surrender of the hostages draws particular attention to the figure of 'Gullum Ali (the head Vackeel) who has been brought by his domestics in a richly ornamented machine; an historical fact of great importance, as that Minister had formerly lost the use of his limbs on an Embassy at Constantinople'. Not strictly accurate, but it shows that by 1792 Ghulam Ali's condition was regarded as incurable.

² A view modified since his original edition.

³ See *Official Documents*, Paper A, Items 2-15, for these consultations and the subsequent planning of the embassy to Mauritius.

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some at least of his advisers did not spare their master's feelings. They had discovered that Ripaud was a rogue. 'From first to last,' declared a memorandum of March 8th in the very, autograph hand of the Binky Nabob (Muhammad Raza), 'the language of this man has been of self-interest and falsehood; nothing has resulted from this business, and nothing will'. Even Ripaud's request to be allowed to go hunting for a distance of eight to ten *cos* was suspicious—when so much chicane and deceit was apparent in that short excursion, what might he not do on a long voyage? In fact, to place affairs of such importance in the hands of such a low fellow was to throw discredit on the whole transaction.

The most practical advice given by the officers was that Ripaud should be made to write letters to 'the Rajah of the French' and be kept under surveillance until the answers arrived. But Tipu's faith was not to be shaken. Amid a whirlwind of dictation, he arranged for Ripaud's vessel to be bought for 17,000 rupees, appointed four envoys to proceed to Mauritius with false papers and in the assumed character of merchants, supplied them with letters of greeting to the French 'Sirdars' and personally drafted a treaty of co-operation with the Government of France on the lines of the fantastic 1795 document, except that this time the expeditionary force was to include 30,000 freed negro slaves as well as 10,000 French troops and that Bombay was to be captured before tackling Bengal. The negotiations completed, one of the envoys was to return to the Malabar coast with the French fleet (alas!), while the other three went on to Paris to salute the Government of the Directory. Ripaud was to remain at Seringapatam as a sort of ambassador.

The programme got off to a very bad start. The purchase money for the ship was handed over to a man called Pernaud, who was to sail with the vakils and deliver the 17,000 rupees to someone at Mauritius nominated by Ripaud. One day in April the party arrived at Mangalore for embarkation, but the following night Pernaud absconded with the loot and sailed away in another ship.

Pause for reflection. If the original vessel were to reach Mauritius without Ripaud she would certainly be seized by the owners (among whom he was evidently one) and the vakils would start work under a cloud; on the other hand, if Ripaud were turned loose in her, it was goodbye both to money and embassy. Finally

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it was decided that Ripaud and the envoys (now reduced to two) should embark together, and the vessel be handed back to the former against his bond for the return of the 17,000 rupees.

All this, plus the fact that the south-west monsoon had put Mangalore harbour out of action just after the first sailing was postponed, held up the whole enterprise for months. One man who was not in the least fretted was François Ripaud. He turned the delay to happy account by founding a Jacobin Club in the capital of Mysore.

This is the moment when the story of Tipu Sultan takes off into the highest reaches of the absurd and all touch with reality is lost. Virtually our whole knowledge of the Club is derived from a single source, but that a substantial one—the celebrated *Proceedings of a Jacobin Club formed at Seringapatam by the French soldiers in the Corps commanded by M. Dompert*, which were among the documents found after Tipu's death and are now in the India Office Library.¹

Absurd, yes, but there is also pathos in the picture of a handful of exiles at a foreign despot's court deploying the whole ritual and jargon of the revolutionary epoch, oblivious of the fact that in their native land the Revolution itself had already been devoured by its children.

Only six meetings—on May 5th, 7th, 8th, 15th and 22nd and on June 4th—are covered by the Proceedings. At the first, the Citizen Ripaud addressed the sixty-nine present on their rights as free citizens and the Republican virtues expected of them. A wizard at procedure, he next revealed to them that they were a Primary Assembly and that their first duty was to appoint a Provisional President who, supported by two Scrutineers, two Secretaries and two Masters of Ceremonies, would then hold a formal election. Citizen Contoir ('the eldest in years') was acclaimed Prov. Pres., but it is without surprise that we find Citizen Ripaud heading the subsequent ballot, giving the Kiss of Peace and Fraternity to Citizen Contoir, reading out the Declara-

¹ The text of the Proceedings, with English translation, is in *Official Documents*, Paper C. The grammar, spelling and handwriting are abominable. It is probably no more than a coincidence that Tipu, in one of his letters to Mauritius, mentions what a hopeless writer Ripaud is (he acted as amanuensis as well as ambassador) and asks to be sent a better one; the Proceedings are below the standard of the most illiterate *Lieutenant de vaisseau*, and a certain Vrenière usually signs as Secretary.

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tion of the Rights of Man, delivering a second lecture on Republican Principles and introducing a *projet de loi*. Joy and acclamation throughout.

On the 7th the only important episode was a florid speech by Citizen Thouvenir, from the verbiage of which one can extract that, in deference to the supposed *intérêts politiques du citoyen Tipou*—his first appearance in that memorable role—they had not yet ventured to display the revolutionary colours; now it was decreed that everything relating to royalty should be burnt, the National Flag raised and the oath to the Nation taken, all in a single ceremony.

Pending that event, there was a further assembly the next morning, gathering ‘peaceably and without weapons’ in the church after Mass (an interesting touch—no Goddess of Reason at Seringapatam!). Oaths were taken, the fifty-odd citizens present were individually kissed by President Ripaud, and a disciplinary code of twenty-two Articles was adopted unanimously.

But the great day was what the Club secretary called *La Qantidi de la 3ème Décade du mois de Floréal, l’an 5ème de la République Française, une et indivisible*, i.e. May 15th, 1797. At six in the morning, ‘by permission of the Prince Tipoo, the Ally of the Republic’, the National Flag was hoisted to the sound of all the artillery and musketry of the camp. After that august moment, a party including Citizen Ripaud, Representative of the French people with the Prince Tipoo and eight citizen artillerymen, marched to the Seringapatam parade ground, where the Citizen Prince awaited them. As they approached, he ordered a salute of 2,300 cannon,¹ five hundred rockets and all the musketry; and the Fort of Seringapatam fired another five hundred cannon. ‘Behold,’ cried the Citizen Prince, ‘my acknowledgement of the Standard of your country, which is dear to me and to which I am allied; it shall always be carried aloft in my country, as it has been in the Republic, my sister! Go, conclude your festival!’

Standards were brought out under guard, the Tree of Liberty was planted and crowned with a ‘Cap of Equality’—legend (but no witness) insists that Tipu donned one too—and then Citizen Ripaud launched into his supreme allocution. It will be sufficient

¹ So says the Secretary, and Husain Ali, in his Mauritius narrative, steps this up to 3,000. We can assume, at any rate, a noisy and gratifying discharge.

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to quote a single burst of fustian, with which 'G. G. Keble, French translator' does his panting best:

What horrors seize me! A religious sensibility overawes me!
My knees fail me! My blood freezes! . . . I behold those victims
of the ferocious English, sawn in pieces between planks. Women,
the victims of their brutality, murdered in the same moment. Oh
extreme of horror! My hair bristles up! I see babes at the breast
stained with the blood of their unfortunate mothers. . . . Per-
fidious and cruel English, remember there is a God, the avenger
of guilt!

Exalted by such eloquence, the whole Assembly took yet another oath:

Ripaud: Citizens, Do you swear hatred of all Kings, except
Tipoo Sultan the Victorious, the Ally of the French Republic,
war against all tyrants and love towards your Country and that of
Citizen Tipoo?

All: Yes! We swear to live free or die!

More salutes—armspiled—adjournment to church—standard
presented to the sepoys who (in what bewilderment!) had also
taken the oath—return to the parade ground—the Hymn to our
Country sung round the Tree of Liberty and, at the passage 'Holy
Patriotic Love', the whole artillery turned loose once more. The
festivities concluded with a ball.

One would give much to have been present at the supper table
of the Citizen Prince that evening, and to have heard his satiric
wit play round the mummery of the day and maybe his own part
in this paeon to the destruction of every thing which he himself
represented. 'It keeps them amused and doesn't hurt me,' may
perhaps summarise his thoughts.

Thereafter the Proceedings get shorter and duller; the only
significant point is an attack on the Commandant, Dompert,
who had signed all the attestations so far, but had failed to attend
the Blessing of the Standards. In fact, he stayed in bed. Rude
remarks by the citizens assembled, but no action taken.

Whether the Club lingered on after the last brief Minute of
June 4th may never be known, nor whether (as might seem
natural) it was revived when a fresh infusion of Jacobins arrived
in due course from Mauritius. It mattered little to Tipu one way
or the other.

ALL HAIL, CITIZEN TIPU!

When the Mysorean embassy and its escort did at last take ship from Mangalore on December 19th, they made heavy weather of it, in every sense.¹ They had hardly put to sea before Ripaud, with five or six of his braves, came up to the vakils, Muhammad Ibrahim and Husain Ali Khan, 'in a very disorderly manner', demanding money and a sight of the papers entrusted to them by Tipu. The former was kept out of their clutches, but the latter were torn open and perused by Ripaud, no doubt to make sure (like Hamlet on his trip to England) that they did not include any recommendations fatal to himself. What with these broils, what with no issue of water for cooking, what with beds in the lascars' quarters (they eventually moved to a *doney*, or ship's boat, on deck), what with heavy rain and horrible sea-sickness, Tipu's delegates were thankful to reach Mauritius after about a month at sea.

Secrecy and anonymity were supposed to be their watchwords; the fiction of being merchants was to be maintained at all costs, and the negotiations with the French 'Sirdars' were to be confidential in the extreme. There was never a hope. The minute the pilot came aboard, the ineffable Ripaud boasted that he was bringing ambassadors from Tipu Sultan. As a result the port surgeon, arriving next to give health clearance, salaamed the unfortunate pair, and told them that he had arranged for 'persons of distinction' to greet them when the ship dropped anchor. He was better—or worse—than his word. In spite of an imploring message to M. Malartic, Governor-General of Mauritius, to send for them 'clandestinely', Muhammad Ibrahim and Husain Ali Khan went ashore to be greeted by a guard of honour drawn up in two ranks, and a salute of one hundred and fifty guns!

But when the parties got down to business, the vakils discovered that their master was going to get the worst of the deal in every possible way: his approach to the French for military aid had been given stunning publicity and there was virtually no aid for him to receive. It was explained to the vakils that the total troops in Mauritius consisted of detachments of two regiments; if only they had come three months earlier they could at least have had 1,000 Europeans who had since been sent to help the Dutch in Batavia. The naval commander, Admiral Sercey, was in the same position of having no fleet—just a few frigates.

¹ See *Official Documents*, Paper A. Items 16–19, for the Narratives of Ripaud and the vakils.

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It was a bitter situation, made worse for the vakils by their association with Ripaud, who, said Malartic firmly, was merely a ship's officer, had *not* been sent by him to Mangalore, and had no status in the negotiations at all. In fact he, Malartic, regarded the vakils as having been dragged to Mauritius under false pretences, and the most he could promise was to call for volunteers and to provide a ship to transport them. He thereupon issued the oft-quoted public proclamation printed in Appendix II. By his references to Tipu's desire for an offensive and defensive alliance with the French and to the preparations being made in Mysore to receive European reinforcements, and above all by his flamboyant declaration that Tipu

... only waits the moment when the French shall come to his assistance to declare war on the English, whom he ardently wishes to expel from India,

Anne Joseph Hyppolite Malartic was ensuring Tipu's destruction as certainly as if he had declared war on him, invaded his country and strung him up to a tree. Remarking that no satisfactory explanation has ever been given of his 'unaccountable action', Roberts¹ points out that the only possible course would have been to make a secret treaty and maintain the utmost immobility until reinforcements could arrive from Europe. One theory (adopted by Wilks) is that Malartic, overwhelmed by 'furious democracy' in Mauritius, was trying to create a diversion. Wellesley, having read the depositions of several English seamen who had been in the island at the time, went further, and believed that many of the 'volunteers' were Jacobins who had been more or less press-ganged for this futile expedition to the mainland.

Whatever the explanation, there is no doubt about the outcome. Exactly ninety-nine persons were shipped in the frigate *Preneuse*, and we have the pitiful parade state:

Chapuy, General of the Land forces	1
Dubuc, General of the Marine	1
Desmoulins, Commandant of the Europeans	1
Officers of the Artillery	2
Marine Officers	6

¹ P. E. Roberts, *India under Wellesley* (London, G. Bell, 1929), p. 43.

ALL HAIL, CITIZEN TIPU!

Ship Builders and Others	4
Officers, Captains, Sergeants, Linguist	26
European Soldiers	36
Soldiers of the second class, or half-caste	22
	—
Total of the persons arriving from Mauritius	99

The vakils, like their predecessors in Paris long ago, managed to smother their anxieties in a round of firework displays, visits to powder mills, and so forth. But it must have been with misery in their hearts that, having arranged for Tipu's letters to the Directory to be forwarded to Paris,¹ they embarked in the *Pre-neuse* (Captain L'Hermite) on March 8th, 1798. After capturing the East Indiamen *Woodcote* and *Raymond* in Tellicherry roads, they came ashore at Mangalore on April 28th. Two days before Lord Wellesley had made his first landfall at Madras.

As it turned out, they and their ninety-nine recruits had quite a cheerful reception from Tipu, mollified perhaps by a thick wad of letters from Mauritius dignitaries assuring him that Muhammad Ibrahim and Husain Ali were delightful fellows who had done their best, and that the virtual failure of the mission was not their fault. The vakils' own message announcing their arrival, in which they made the most of the clove and nutmeg trees brought by Tipu's order and requiring eighty men to carry them over the Ghats, received a gracious response; subsistence rates for the Europeans were agreed without argument, and palanquins and horses were supplied for them according to their rank, together with an extra palanquin for Husain Ali, who was suffering from boils. Husain Ali, incidentally, was enjoined to write a full account of their adventures, including everything 'curious and interesting', and this has come down to us, as well as one of equal length (between five and six thousand words) by his colleague. Finally, the vakils and the Mangalore authorities were warned to 'encourage and satisfy' the ninety-nine in every way, and not to vex or displease them over trifles.

In no extant correspondence, in fact, does Tipu betray disappointment that the party sent to him was so few in numbers and

¹ 'In two frigates', they proudly reported, but in fact the frigates were sailing anyway as escort to a couple of richly laden Spanish ships.

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(as it turned out) indifferent in quality, nor any awareness that he was provoking the suspicions of the English by taking them into his service. It is the most striking instance so far—there will be others to come—of the apathy or mental blindness which seems to have come over him in his last years.

The Wellesley Confrontation

MALARTIC's proclamation first came to the notice of Lord Wellesley on June 8th, 1798, when he read about it in a Calcutta newspaper. Such is his own account; I have not been able to identify the journal. Much later, in a tremendous Minute of August 12th, he admits that the whole thing seemed so incredible that he was at first inclined to doubt its authenticity, though no such reservations appeared in a letter fired off at once (June 9th) to General Harris,¹ at Madras. Forwarding a copy of the Proclamation, in case Harris has not seen it, the Governor-General remarks:

There seems to be so little doubt that the Proclamation really was published at the Mauritius, that it must become a matter of serious discussion between this Government and Tippoo. . . . Perhaps the result of it may be to prove that M. Malartic had exaggerated, or wholly misrepresented the intentions of Tippoo, but on the other hand if Tippoo should choose to avow the objects of his embassy to have been such as are described in the Proclamation, the consequences may be very serious, and may ultimately involve us in the calamity of war . . . You will therefore turn your attention to the means of collecting a force, if necessity should unfortunately require it; but it is not my desire that you should take any public steps . . . before you receive some further intimation from me.

The next copy of the proclamation came, rather surprisingly, from Lord Macartney at the Cape of Good Hope.² *He* had got it from the skipper of an American ship, the *Sultan*, bound for Boston, which had left Mauritius on February 27th. Apart from noting that one frigate was then ready and another fitting out to take the volunteers to the Malabar Coast, Macartney did not in

¹ Lieutenant-General George Harris, appointed Commander-in-Chief at Madras in March 1798. Also acting-Governor pending the arrival of the 2nd Lord Clive (due at the end of August).

² This correspondence between the Cape authorities and Wellesley is in Add. MSS., British Museum, 37,278, f. 248 *et seq.*

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this letter or subsequently take an alarmist attitude—he had not changed much since his old appeasement years at Madras! Sir Hugh Christian, Admiral commanding at the Cape, who also sent Wellesley a copy of the proclamation, was much more impressed: he could not believe that Tipu would have adopted such a measure without ‘previous positive instructions from the French Directory’—took it for granted that Ceylon was their objective, probable point of rendezvous the River Plate, etc. etc.

Macartney’s letter was dated March 28th, and since Wellesley himself had left the Cape only the previous week, it was by a hairsbreadth that he failed to arrive at Calcutta with this explosive document in his pocket. As it was, he received it on June 18th. Four days earlier he had written his own first letter to Tipu Sultan. The opening of that ‘serious discussion’ of the Malartic affair one would assume; but nothing of the kind!

Being anxious to afford you every proof in my power of my sincere wish to maintain the good understanding which had so long subsisted between your Highness and the Company. . . .

Such is the Governor-General’s exordium, and he goes on to discuss in mild and gracious terms the only important territorial dispute outstanding between Tipu and the Company—the future of the Wynad district south of Coorg. This was in fact Wellesley’s first contribution to a correspondence whose ‘sweepingly dishonest cordiality on both sides’¹ would in other circumstances be dismissed as farcical. In justice to Wellesley, Tipu himself had set the pace in a letter to Sir John Shore (received at Calcutta on April 26th, when his vakils were about to land at Mangalore) asking him to impress on his successor ‘a sense of the friendship and unanimity subsisting between us’ and making a pious reference to ‘inviolable adherence’ to engagements between the two states.

If this kind of solemn nonsense did not restrain Tipu from seeking allies against the English, still less did it deter the English from active measures against him. John Malcolm once described Wellesley as ‘slow in council but rapid in action’, yet on the great question of peace or war with Tipu Sultan, he seems to have made up his mind without taking council at all.² On June 20th, before

¹ Thompson and Garratt, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

² The first circulation of papers was on July 7th (*Bengal Secret Proceedings*, July 9th, 1798). An editorial footnote in Vol. V of Wellesley’s *Despatches* (p. 31)

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he had had time to receive a reply to his first letter to Harris, he wrote to him again, repeating the phrase about 'serious representations' to Tipu, but announcing his decision to 'call upon the allies without delay and to assemble the army on the coast with all possible expedition'. Harris is to inform him where this can best be done with a view to 'marching direct upon Seringapatam', and when in his view the army should move in order to get there before the Malabar coast 'shall become safe for the approach of any naval force'; let an intelligent officer be despatched to him with this and all other information needed for 'striking a sudden blow against Tippoo before he can receive foreign aid'. In return, Harris will be sent the largest supply of specie procurable, and is promised that 'cordial support in all your exertions' which, as Wellesley's harshest critics have never denied, he gave in magnificent measure to his servants.

From this and other correspondence it is clear that far from making 'representations' to Tipu, the Governor-General intended to launch an outright surprise attack on him with all the forces at the Company's command, and if successful, to extort from him the following terms: cession of his remaining territory between the western Ghats and the Malabar coast, thereby cutting him off from any future sea communication with France; the exclusion, now and in the future, of all Frenchmen from his army and dominions; an indemnity to cover the whole cost of the war; the admission of permanent representatives of the Company and its allies at his Court. Given that such a war was defensible at all, these were shrewdly chosen conditions. The last in particular, if inserted by Cornwallis into the Treaty of Seringapatam, might have changed Tipu's history. One has only to imagine the influence upon—or at worst the full flow of intelligence concerning—the events in the preceding chapter, had there been a Malet or a Kirkpatrick *en poste* at Seringapatam.

Such was the situation on June 20th. By July 6th, instant war upon Tipu Sultan had been abandoned. Wellesley gives the reasons in his long letter to Dundas of the latter date:

Upon consulting the persons most conversant with military details, I found that the actual state of the frontier fortifications states that 'no individual at Calcutta' except Mr. G. H. Barlow, Secretary to the Government, and Mr. Edmonstone, Persian translator, knew anything of the Governor-General's proceedings.

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of the Carnatic, of the train of artillery, and of the stores of grain and other provisions was such as not to admit of any sudden movement of a large force . . . I also found that the expense of making the necessary preparations would be very heavy, and that the result was likely to lead to a protracted and expensive, although, according to every opinion, a successful war.

All this, together with general financial embarrassment and the fact that no immediate help could be expected from the Marathas or the Nizam, had pressed with 'accumulated weight' on the Governor-General's mind. And so, to his utmost pain and regret, his *blitzkrieg* had to be called off.

Was the turn-about spontaneous? Who were 'the persons most conversant with military details', whom Wellesley had now stooped to consult? By July 6th, the only letter which could possibly have reached him from Madras was one of June 23rd. In this, indeed, Harris does drop a first hint of doubt. In view of the lack of cash and the effect Britain's being at war in India could have on European affairs, might it not be better to let Tipu make the *amende honorable* rather than to 'avail ourselves of the error he had run into' and endeavour to punish him for his insolence? But there is not a word about technical difficulties; on the contrary, various troop movements are sketched in and there is even an assurance that the supply of grain to the garrisons is 'in forwardness' and can easily be reinforced without causing suspicion. It was not until July 6th, the day Wellesley wrote to Dundas, that Harris signed a further letter in which, backed by papers from Josiah Webbe (Government Secretary, Madras) and Colonel Barry Close (Adjutant-General) he sought to prove that any immediate movement in the Carnatic was impossible. These documents were received in Calcutta on the 17th.

In other words, Wellesley's military advice must have been drawn from Bengal, not Madras, army circles. He had at least two sources. One was Lieutenant-General Sir Alured Clarke, Commander-in-Chief since March 1798, and formerly in the same post at Madras. The other deserves more attention. Wellesley was a lonely man—deliberately so for the most part—and had no intimates. But as all the world was soon to know, he had brothers, four altogether. Two of them were on the spot. The youngest, Henry (the future Lord Cowley) had come out with him as Private

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Secretary; the third in age, Arthur (the future Duke of Wellington) had been in Bengal for over a year as full Colonel commanding the 33rd Regiment. He had never served in the Carnatic, but had spent an observant leave there and was already the cool, hard-headed student of military problems, above all in the field of supply and transport, which he remained for the rest of his life.¹ So when, at the crucial moment, June 28th, he put the case for postponing action, for discounting the fear of French aid to Tipu and for giving the latter a chance of 'getting out of the scrape', we can be sure that these unwelcome views had solid professional grounding.

The whole story—Tipu's original offence, the plan for immediate attack, the reasons for abandoning it—is poured out to Dundas in Wellesley's July 6th letter and the new policy is rationalised in the way which is one of his hall-marks. While tacit submission to such an 'insult and injury' would greatly elevate the hopes of Tipu and correspondingly lower our influence, on the other hand:

The results of his embassy having only served to expose his treachery, and the weakness of the enemy in this part of the world, a remonstrance of a firm and temperate spirit will be sufficient to satisfy our honour and to convince the Native Powers that our moderation alone induces us to abstain from that more rigorous course of which his conduct would furnish the ample justification, and of which our strength insures the certain effect.

I have therefore called upon Tippoo to make a public disavowal of the proceedings of his ambassadors, to declare distinctly the nature of his intentions towards us and our allies, and particularly to explain, without disguise, the destination of the force raised in the Isle of France, and lately landed at Mangalore.

The text of this all-important communication to Tipu was to be forwarded overland within the next few days, and one shares the imagined eagerness of Dundas to peruse it. But neither he nor

¹ A masterly memorandum on the Baramahal as a defensive and offensive advance zone for the Carnatic, dated July 18th, 1798, is printed in Wellington, *Supplementary Despatches*, Vol. I, pp. 58-67. His 'observations' of June 28th, referred to in my following sentence, also appear, in draft form, in the *Supplementary Despatches*.

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we were ever to have that pleasure. In the course of another of his exhaustive letters to Dundas, dated as late as October 11th, Wellesley reverts, in a thoroughly 'Oh, by the way' manner, to 'my letter No. 6' in which 'I informed you that I had actually forwarded a representation to Tippoo and had called on the allies to concur in it', and goes on to explain why he had not.

Wellesley's argument is that, having looked at the whole political picture in India, he felt he must wait until his military preparations were more advanced, until there might be a fleet on the Malabar coast, and until he had a better idea of the disposition of England's allies; in general, the delay would 'afford me the opportunity of accommodating the nature and extent of my propositions to my means of enforcing them'. There are two ways of interpreting this, and they have been seized upon by Wellesley's admirers and his critics respectively. The first is to take his reasoning at its face value—how entirely prudent not to make a remonstrance until you can back it by force should the recipient be defiant or evasive! The other is favoured by hostile historians like Mill: Wellesley never intended a bona-fide settlement; his reason for not putting forward his original terms was that Tipu might accept them and thereby escape destruction; better to wait until we were strong enough to make impossible demands—and then swoop. Wellesley drafted his July 6th letter to Dundas just five weeks after assuming his government, and though a summing up must be delayed for a few pages, we are already at the heart of the question of his good faith in his dealings with Tipu.

Before moving forward, there is something to be said, in justice to Wellesley, about his situation on the world scene. When he left England late in 1797, his country's fortunes appeared desperate. He had seen his great predecessor, Cornwallis, standing by for action in the terrible series of Fleet mutinies, then hustled off to Ireland to deal with the threats (which materialised) of invasion and rebellion there. He had seen the triumphs of the revolutionary armies of France followed by the emergence of the Directory's tremendous sword-arm, Napoleon Bonaparte. He had seen Britain's last ally, Austria, defeated at Rivoli. On October 17th, 1797, a few days before he took oath as Governor-General, the Treaty of Campo Formio had released great armies for action against the English on any front. The Governor-General-elect

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might well regard himself as also the Killedar of a remote and threatened fortress.

It was all very well for Arthur to argue (in his memorandum of June 28th, 1798, already quoted) that 'the obstacles to the departure of any French force from Europe are obvious to everybody'. Only a few weeks later it began to be rumoured in Calcutta that just such a departure was imminent and a letter (dated June 18th) from the Secret Committee was on its way to warn Wellesley that Napoleon himself had slipped away from Toulon on the 19th of the previous month with a powerful armament, and that his destination might well be India, via Egypt. Until he received this in September, Wellesley thought that an expedition by the Cape route was more likely than the 'wild adventure' of the conquest of Egypt, followed by the 'more extravagant project of conveying aid by Suez to Tippoo Sultan'.

Among those who regarded such a project as by no means extravagant was Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, frantically scouring the Mediterranean for news of the French fleet, with Napoleon's army on board. In letter after letter to the Home government and to the English Consul at Alexandria he affirmed that if the French were indeed making for Egypt, their next move would be an attack on India 'in concert with Tippoo Saib'; the plan was not nearly so difficult as might appear at first sight, especially at that season of the year when favourable winds could carry a fleet from Suez to the Malabar Coast in a mere three weeks. For his part he would never feel secure until we had got possession of that coast, even at the cost of a war—had *he* made the last peace with Tipu he would have given his head rather than leave him in control of Mangalore.¹

On October 1st Wellesley heard of Napoleon's landing near

¹ See *Despatches and Letters of Lord Viscount Nelson*, ed. Nicolas (London, Colburn, 1845), Vol. III; letters to Earl Spencer (June 15th, 1798), George Baldwin, Consul at Alexandria (June 24th and 26th), and the Earl of St. Vincent (June 29th).

I owe to Mr. Oliver Warner the suggestion that Nelson's alertness about the Malabar Coast may have had its roots in the first naval engagement of his career. He was a midshipman in the frigate *Seahorse* when on February 19th, 1775, she captured an armed ketch in the service of Haidar Ali off Anjengo. The fact that this was during an interlude of peace between the English and Mysore does not seem to have inhibited either party. (Log of the *Seahorse*, Public Record Office, Adm/51/883.)

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Alexandria (June 1st). The fact that the news was quickly followed by that of the French fleet's destruction in the Battle of the Nile (August 1st) did not, as has sometimes been suggested, ease Wellesley's anxieties—rather the reverse. With no access by canal to Suez, a French fleet at the eastern end of the Mediterranean was in any case out of harm's way, so far as India was concerned; far more formidable was the idea of a general of Napoleon's vast vision and matchless powers of execution ashore in Egypt with an army whose retreat to France had been cut off.

There is a large literature on the question of whether he did ever seriously consider making for India, either by ship via the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, or by a grand Alexander-like march overland the whole way, and it is far beyond my scope even to summarise the evidence. But it is known that the Directory drafted instructions (never received at Mauritius) for all available shipping to rendezvous with the land forces at Suez,¹ and Roberts² makes the fair point that lightly using the word 'impossible' about Napoleon's ambitions was to lead many a great State to destruction. It is certainly not the word to apply to the threat of a strong French expedition, led by Napoleon Bonaparte at the height of his powers, landing at Mangalore in the autumn of 1798. Improbable, yes; impossible, no.

Whether menaced by Napoleon or not, Wellesley did not delay for an instant in his preparations for a final settlement with Tipu Sultan. On the military side, he had been outraged by what he regarded as obstruction at Madras, and indeed there is more than a trace of that Presidency's traditional defeatism in the memoranda of Barry Close and Webbe—two great public servants to whom the Governor-General was to give his fullest confidence later on. He was particularly derisive of Close's estimate that it would take six months to get the Carnatic army into motion of any kind. Far from being available for a swift attack on Mysore, it would in that case be useless even to repel invasion, especially by

¹ F. Charles-Roux, *L'Angleterre et l'Expédition Française en Egypte*, Vol. I, p. 229. This vast work, published by the Société Royale de Géographie d'Egypte in 1925, ranges over the whole field.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

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such a swift moving enemy as Tipu. What sort of value for the Company's money was this?

Worse still, the Governor-General detected 'the spirit of faction' arising in the Council of Fort St. George. This, he announced, he was resolved to crush; he possessed sufficient powers to do so; and he would exert those powers to the utmost extent rather than suffer the smallest part of his plans to be frustrated by such unworthy means. And so Madras felt the first impact of that 'irrepressible sense of Jupitership' (Torrens's apt phrase) which was soon to impress, or alarm, or sometimes even to amuse, all India, Westminster and Leadenhall Street. However, the storm soon passed. The Madras soldiers and civil servants, catching something of Wellesley's own *élan*, began to round up the resources—including the inevitable 50,000 bullocks—required to put the Presidency's excellent but immobilised forces into the field. One of the Governor-General's own initiatives provokes a smile. He had decided that Colonel Wellesley, though proving such a useful adviser in Bengal, was due for a gentle shove forward into the arena of future glory—the Carnatic. Accordingly the 33rd Regiment was moved south and, so that the enemy might tremble at the very name of its commanding officer, a hint was dropped to Harris:

There can be no objection to the public mention of your expectation of the 33rd Regiment. I should even be glad that the news reached Tippoo, as it would convince him that I am in earnest . . . my object being to impress the mind of Tippoo with serious apprehension.

Madras did not see the matter quite in that light. Harris (now Commander-in-Chief-designate for the advance on Seringapatam) and his Council colleague, Edward Saunders, dared to grumble. Part of the deal was that they must give up their own favourite regiment, the hardy and disciplined 36th, in exchange for the 33rd, and they doubted whether this unacclimatised corps, as they regarded it, would fill the gap. Wellesley offered a solatium in the form of an extra Dragoon regiment, expected from England, but otherwise did not budge. The 33rd went to Madras, the 36th sulkily to Bengal, there to lose its very identity by being drafted into the 76th.

On the political front, Wellesley's first care was to try to

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reanimate the Triple Alliance. Letters, copious and vehement,¹ were sent off to Captain Kirkpatrick at the Nizam's Court, to Palmer at the Peshwa's and in due course to Lieutenant-Colonel Collins, appointed resident with Scindhia in September. The common theme was—tell your men about the Malartic proclamation, incite them to join in the expostulations to Tipu, and offer the services of the English Governor-General as mediator in their own quarrels.

Kirkpatrick had a special task. His brother's talks with Wellesley at the Cape were to bear early fruit. There was a stage, it is true, when the Kirkpatrick dynasty seemed in danger. James Achilles, one political jump behind Calcutta, had rashly conveyed to the Nizam's Minister that in the opinion of the Governor-General, war with Tipu was not only inevitable but desirable; in addition to that very moderate flight of fancy, he had wrongly hinted that compulsory methods were going to be used to propel Scindhia back to Hindostan. For Wellesley this seemed a sufficient excuse to give yet another nudge to the career of his brother Arthur. A letter of August 17th summoned the latter in haste to Fort William for briefing, after which he was not only to settle the Nizam's business, but in due course to be the Governor-General's envoy to Tipu Sultan—'a fine opportunity for you to distinguish yourself', indeed! All this fell through, apparently because of the continual postponement of the mission to Seringapatam, and in the event Captain Kirkpatrick proved perfectly competent to conclude, on September 1st, a new subsidiary treaty² with Hyderabad.

By this, the English were to provide the Nizam with a total of 6,000 native troops 'with firelocks and a due proportion of field pieces, manned by Europeans', in return for a cash subsidy of twenty-four lakhs, 17,100 rupees a year in silver of full currency

¹ Much of the Governor-General's correspondence of this period in the India Office Records bears the interesting annotation, 'A true copy, Benjm. Wyatt, Assistant'. See D. M. Forrest, *The Oriental*, for the unusual career of this member of the well-known architectural family, whose Indian connections later brought him such commissions as the old Oriental Club in Hanover Square, the Duke of York's Column and the refacing of Apsley House.

² 'Subsidiary' in the sense that a subsidy was to be paid by the one party in exchange for military protection by the other. As fully developed by Wellesley—the great exponent though not the originator of the technique—subsidiary alliances often led to a cession of territory instead of cash payments.

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(i.e. £242,710). An interesting provision was that the subsidiary force could be used to protect the Nizam's person and to chastise rebels or excitors of disturbance, but not on trifling occasions or to collect revenue.

The heart of the bargain, however, was that in exchange for the enlarged English contingent the Nizam was to disband what Wellesley had come to call the 'French forces' in Hyderabad. By this, of course, he meant the 14,000 sepoys and mercenaries assembled by Raymond.¹ The operation was carried through with admirable dexterity. Troops which had been quietly moved to Guntur advanced into the Nizam's territory, and thanks to the blended tact and firmness of their commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Roberts, working with Kirkpatrick and his young assistant John Malcolm, the *coup d'état* did not cost a single life. The Nizam was now not only stripped of his 'French army', but was lined up for any future brush with Tipu. Dundas received a proud letter and the trophy of a tricolor flag—'the only one erected on the Continent of India', said Wellesley, but as we have seen, he was wrong.

With the Marathas there was less success. Though Poona had been kept fully informed of events at Hyderabad, and the return of Nana Fadnavis to power in October after a temporary eclipse seemed a hopeful omen, the Peshwa managed to elude all suggestions for a subsidiary alliance. And even if (as was more than doubtful) he was sincerely willing to join in an anti-Tipu crusade, the welter of intrigue and treachery into which Maratha affairs had fallen left it an open question whether any promises could or would be kept. Wellesley, in fact, like Cornwallis before him, had to hope that while the English did the fighting, with a Hyderabad contingent in support, the threat rather than the actuality of Maratha pressure from the north might help to bring Tipu to his knees.

So the first five months of the Governor-Generalship passed by, and still no 'representation' or 'remonstrance' about his flirtations

¹ Raymond himself died on March 25th, 1798. He was succeeded by a man called Piron, whom some writers describe as a Frenchman, others as a German. Neither is entirely wrong—he was a native of Alsace.

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with the French had reached Tipu Sultan. Did he feel himself safe? Unless his intelligence service had gone into great decay, he must have known that there was now a vigorous opponent instead of a neutral administrator in power at Calcutta and that his every act was being jealously watched. Given that his vakils had lost their heads in Mauritius, given that the Malartic proclamation had gone far beyond anything he himself had intended, there was still plenty of time for him to escape from the ridiculous trap into which he had fallen. All he had to do was to disown the proclamation and return the ninety-and-nine whence they came, and it is difficult to see that even Wellesley could have found a *casus belli* in the incident.

But no, the wretched contingent was received with honour and housed in a newly built pettah between Seringapatam and Mysore. Of its two leaders, Chapuy, 'General of the Land Forces', was in fact a *Chef de brigade*; Dubuc, 'General of the Marine', held the rank of Captain in the Republican Navy. Dubuc does not seem to have gone up to Seringapatam, but to have remained in charge of maritime affairs at Mangalore. However, as early as July 8th he was designated as head of yet another embassy from Tipu to the government of France. He took a long time getting under way. On July 20th Tipu issued him with papers giving him a wide discretion to negotiate; also a Letter of Credit in equally lofty terms, though without specifying on whom the ambassador might draw! More importantly, he was to take with him the last of the long series of proposals for a French expedition to India. Briefer than its predecessors and in more general terms, it seems no more than a despondent exercise whose futility even Tipu must have realised: a force of 'ten or fifteen thousand troops' is vaguely specified, and to make their task virtually impossible, they are to land not at Mangalore, but on the coast of Coromandel, 'in preference Porto Norvo', a mere 110 miles from Madras!

Thus briefed, and with a marine major called Filletas and a Mysorean vakil¹ as colleagues, Dubuc set off for his embarkation point, the Danish settlement of Tranquebar. He arrived there

¹ In his letter to the Directory (*Official Documents*, Paper B, Item 22). Tipu refers to 'my subjects Sheik Abdoulraim and Mahomet Bi-smilla', but the Dubuc correspondence from Tranquebar which follows immediately (Items 23-5) implies that only one vakil actually joined the party.

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some time in August, but an endless wait ensued while appeals for journey-money (some of them intercepted by the English) were fired off to Tipu. An un-named informant (Home Misc. 572, I.O.R.) gives us a glimpse of Dubuc as he lounged about Tranquebar—‘he bothers me most unmercifully with his gasconade, and how he has been *grandement reçu par le Nabob*. He has always been a great liar, and now he is a preposterous one.’ All this was a vast embarrassment to the Danes, and M. Anker, their Governor-General, nervously assured Wellesley that the French officer was only there to visit his wife and family! It was not until February 7th, 1799, that the mission set sail for Mauritius,¹ where, so far as is known, it came to a full stop.

If this was Tipu Sultan’s final appeal to his phantom allies the French, we are now to see him in correspondence for the last time with his flesh-and-blood enemies, the English.

Since Wellesley’s letter of June 14th, 1798, ‘sweepingly dishonest cordiality’ had continued to reign. On July 10th come Tipu’s congratulations—‘pleasure and satisfaction which cannot be expressed’—on the Governor-General’s appointment, and assurances about constant adherence to treaties. On August 7th Wellesley responds with the good news that his Commissioners in Malabar have decided that the Wynad was *not* ceded to the Company under the Treaty of Seringapatam, so Tipu is free to occupy it whenever it suits him. A pause now until September 28th, when a letter from Tipu dated September 2nd reaches Calcutta. The Wynad decision is noted without warmth—nothing there but forests and heaps of stones—and claims are put forward with regard to one or two minor places still in dispute. However, unction wells up as usual:

Mischief-makers, by starting empty disputes and altercations, hope to accomplish their own purposes, but by the favour of God, the fountains of union and harmony between the two states possess too much purity and clearness to be sullied by the devices of self-interested persons.

¹ Wellesley, who had kept an extremely close eye on Dubuc, told the Secret Committee (Feb. 13th) that he had despatched the *Osterley* with a party of the 28th Dragoons, to try and intercept his vessel. But this gallant charge of the sea cavalry was too late.

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Wellesley lets this go by and on October 24th Tipu writes again about the contested villages. Then at last the Governor-General takes his quill seriously in hand, and within four days of each other, addresses two remarkable letters to Tipu Sultan. In the first (dated November 4th), he announces, with trumpeting of pride and references to Divine Providence, a great victory over 'the enemy of mankind'—in other words, the Battle of the Nile.¹ He adds:

Confident from the union and attachment subsisting between us that this intelligence will afford you sincere satisfaction, I could not deny myself the pleasure of communicating it.

—a piece of cynicism only tolerable on the far-fetched assumption that both writer and recipient enjoyed a joke. No reference to the Mauritius embassy, or Malartic's proclamation, or the ninety-and-nine.

On the 8th, the tone changes. Taking as his text Tipu's earlier reference to 'mischief-makers', Wellesley sadly reflects on the success of that dangerous people, the French, in this respect. Then comes a thunderous hint:

It is impossible that you should suppose me ignorant of the intercourse which subsists between you and the French, whom you know to be inveterate enemies of the Company . . . nor does it appear necessary or proper that I should any longer conceal from you the surprise and concern with which I perceived you disposed to involve yourself in all the ruinous consequences of a connection which threatens not only to subvert the foundations of friendship between you and the Company, but to introduce into your kingdom the principles of anarchy and confusion and . . . to destroy the religion which you revere.

¹ Nelson had written off at once to the Governor of Bombay. His tone was now reassuring—quite apart from the great naval victory, there was nothing about India in Napoleon's intercepted despatches, nor was there news of ships assembling at Suez. Nelson's letter was entrusted to Lieutenant Thomas Duval. Travelling overland via Alexandretta, Aleppo and Basra, he reached India from Aboukir Bay in sixty-five days (see Nelson's *Despatches*, letter of Aug. 9th, 1798, to the Governor of Bombay, *et seq.*). The East India Company, by a resolution of April 24th, 1799, expressed their high sense of Lord Nelson's 'magnanimous conduct on that glorious occasion' and voted him ten thousand pounds.

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Perhaps to prevent his correspondent wondering *why* it should no longer be necessary or proper to conceal a surprise which the writer has managed to bottle up for five months, he switches abruptly back to the familiar language of flattery and compliment and finishes by suggesting, on behalf of the Company and its allies, that Major Doveton ('already known to you'—he, of course, escorted home the boy hostages) should proceed to the Presence and put forward a plan for mutual security and the welfare of all parties.

In truth it was tactics—and intelligent tactics at that—which lay behind the choice of this precise date for Wellesley's long-delayed 'representations' to Tipu. November 8th was a point of convergence. Less than three weeks before the 'French army' at Hyderabad had been disarmed—Tipu would know about that; almost simultaneously had come news of the destruction of the French Fleet at Aboukir Bay—Wellesley had just made sure he knew about that too; within the past few days the siege train essential for any attack on Seringapatam had at last been brought forward to Vellore—this meant that the army of the Carnatic was almost ready to move. On the other hand, there was still a couple of months before the opening of the Mysore invasion season—just time for Doveton to carry out his mission and for the consequent decision on peace or war to be taken.

What exactly was that mission, and what its chances of success? Wellesley had for months been under powerful pressure from the adviser he respected most—his brother Arthur—to speed up the negotiations and to offer reasonable terms. Of the three demands which had been in Wellesley's mind from the start, and which now formed the basis of his instructions to Doveton, Arthur would have been content to extort one, the reception of an allied Resident at Seringapatam; he was cool towards another, the exclusion of all Frenchmen from Mysore; and he could never see why, without being defeated in battle, Tipu should be expected to agree the third, the cession of his coastal territory below the Ghats. In the face of such views, backed with practical arguments against war reiterated so often that, as Arthur remarked, 'I am afraid I shall be accused of boring Mornington', the latter can have been under no illusion that for Doveton to press the full programme on Tipu would amount to forcing him to fight. After one has given him the benefit of every doubt, there seems no

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possible reason why, if he really wanted a peaceful solution, Wellesley did not settle—had not settled months before—for the modified proposals which his brother so powerfully urged.

What the Governor-General failed to foresee was that Tipu might neither accept nor reject the Doveton mission—that he would simply stall. It was not until Christmas Day that Tipu's next letter, dated December 18th, reached Madras,¹ where it was read on the 31st by Wellesley; he had arrived that day to post himself as near as possible to the scene of action. After expressing his pleasure, more than could possibly be conveyed in writing, over the Battle of the Nile, Tipu launches into his own version of the mission to Mauritius. Though well-worn by quotation, it is essential to our tale:

In this Sircar (the gift of God), there is a mercantile tribe, who employ themselves in trading by sea and land. Their agents purchased a two-masted vessel, and having loaded her with rice, departed with a view to traffic. It happened that she went to Mauritius, from where forty persons, French, and of a dark colour, of whom ten or fifteen were artificers, and the rest servants, paying the hire of the ship, came in here in search of employment.

Such as chose to take service were entertained, and the remainder departed beyond the confines of this Sircar (the gift of God); and the French, who are full of vice and deceit, have perhaps taken advantage of the departure of the ship to put about reports with a view to ruffle the minds of both Sircars.

From such light fiction, the writer passes to the usual reflections on friendship and unity, and thence to an autobiographical note 'I am resident at home, at times taking the air, and at others amusing myself with hunting at a spot which is used as a pleasure ground'. As for the idea of Major Doveton coming to see him, he

¹ Letters seem to have taken about a week to travel between Seringapatam and Madras—the point becomes of some significance later. Seringapatam—Calcutta mail was normally routed to Madras and thence by sea, taking up to a further fortnight, dependent on wind and weather. It is rather puzzling why Arthur Wellesley, writing to his brother on November 22nd, comments that the earliest day on which an answer to the Governor-General's November 10th letter can be expected at Madras is December 20th.

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for his part is quite happy to rely on the existing treaties, strengthened as they are by all this 'amicable correspondence'.

At that point letters began to cross. On December 10th Wellesley had written pretty sharply from Calcutta asking that a satisfactory reply to his of a month before should be sent to him at Madras without delay. What he actually received was half a dozen lines of rejoicing and gratification from Tipu's friendly heart, which arrived on January 11th. But by then a real 'Wellesley special' was on its way to Seringapatam. Under dateline Fort St. George, January 9th, 1799, the Governor-General for the first time gets down to chapter and verse. After brushing aside the yarn about the 'two-masted vessel' as totally irrelevant, he sets out in well-informed terms everything he knows about the Mauritius embassy and its sequel, arraigns Tipu's conduct under eight magisterial headings and calls upon him 'in the most serious and solemn manner' to give Major Doveton audience.

Apart from one of the too frequent references to his own just and equitable behaviour about the Wynad, which besprinkle Wellesley's minutes and correspondence and cast a damp of hypocrisy over even that transaction, this letter is comparatively free from cant, and if Tipu had by now been accessible to commonsense he would have recognised his danger, and acted swiftly to avert it.

We have in fact no unarguable proofs of his mental state. Wilks (who wrote after talking to eye-witnesses, but seldom names them specifically) alleges that he had 'nearly made up his mind to throw himself unconditionally upon his Lordship's compassion', but that 'the lingering indecision of the fatalist' prevailed. Roberts sees him as a 'sullen and huddled figure,' a 'cowering victim' passively awaiting the *coup de grâce* and meanwhile posting off confused and embarrassed letters to his tormentor.¹

This is perhaps over-lurid, but certainly Tipu's reaction to the Wellesley ultimatum of January 9th suggests something not far from mental collapse. He had earlier been supplied with a copy of the Declaration of War by the 'Grand Signior' (i.e. Sultan Selim at Constantinople) against the French in consequence of their invasion of Egypt. On January 16th Wellesley reinforced this by forwarding a letter which Sultan Selim had in September handed

¹ Wilks, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 378; Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 55.

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to Spencer Smith, the British Minister at his Court, for transmission to 'the Indian Sovereign, Tippoo Sultan'. The heart of this long rhetorical document, which Spencer Smith himself had engineered,¹ may be found in a paragraph near the end:

We make it our special request that your Majesty will please to refrain from entering into any measures against the English, or lending any compliant ear to the French . . . we wish the connection above alluded to to be exchanged in favour of Great Britain.

Tipu deals with this and—almost as an afterthought—advertises to Wellesley's January 9th letter in the following composition, received at Madras on February 13th:

I have been much gratified by the agreeable receipt of your Lordship's two friendly letters, the first brought by a camel man, the last by hircarrahs, and have understood their contents. I have received the letter which the Prince, in station like Jumsheid, with angels as his guards, with troops numerous as the stars, the sun illumining the world of the heaven of empire and dominion, the luminary giving splendour to the universe of the firmament of glory and power, the Sultaun of the sea and the land, the King of Rome [i.e. Sultan Selim] be his empire and his power perpetual!—addressed to me and which reached you through the British Envoy.

Being frequently disposed to make excursions and hunt, I am accordingly proceeding on a hunting excursion. You will be pleased to despatch Major Doveton (about whose coming your friendly pen has repeatedly written) slightly attended (or unattended).

Always continue to gratify me by friendly letters, notifying your welfare.

It is this kind of thing which tends to disperse the 'fate-laden atmosphere . . . almost that of Greek tragedy', which for Roberts

¹ Spencer Smith to Wellesley, Nov. 7th, 1798: 'I hope your Lordship approves of my idea of the Grand Signior's and the Vizier's aimiable exhortations to Tippoo, anything of this kind that I can render more to the purpose, I should rejoice to accomplish to your ideas.' Spencer Smith was brother to the famous Sir Sidney Smith, defender of Acre.

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overhangs the last few months of Tipu Sultan's life. Yet Wilks assures us that it was intended as a serious acceptance of the English embassy, and that Tipu actually set out from his capital in the hope of meeting Major Doveton at the frontier. But it was too late. On February 3rd, considering that there had been ample time for an answer to have reached him, the Governor-General had given General Harris orders to march. He did not now countermand them, though Harris, as we shall see, received elaborate directions on how to deal with any further peace move by Tipu.

In justice to Wellesley, time was already slipping by. Tipu still sounded flippant about the Doveton mission and he only had to drag out the correspondence a few weeks longer, or to start peace talks and then stalemate them, for the English to be faced with a year's postponement of their campaign—with the appalling loss of prestige, and far worse of money, which that would involve. But it is a pity that Wellesley himself now procrastinated—in word though not in deed. Without deigning to say why to anyone,¹ he waited until February 22nd to write his last letter to Tipu Sultan, and even then only sent it to Harris to be despatched the day he crossed the Mysore frontier. This happened on March 4th, but by then Tipu was about to fight a battle at the other end of his kingdom, and is unlikely to have received the letter until about the 10th. It referred in restrained terms to Tipu's 'long silence on this important and pressing occasion', to the absolute necessity of the allied armies securing themselves by advancing, to the proper season for Doveton's mission having passed, and to the authority he, Wellesley, had given to General Harris to receive any embassy despatched to him.

Before we pass to the closing scenes of Tipu's life, one more

¹ He did, however, in a letter of Feb. 14th, ask for Arthur's views on what line he ought to take, and got the usual uncompromising reply—'send Doveton to Tippoo immediately' (Wellington, *Supp. Desp.*, Feb. 16th, 1799, and note). From a memorandum which he wrote in 1805, defending his brother's administration, Arthur seems to have later convinced himself that the course he so long advocated was actually followed—'all that was required of Tipu . . . was a renunciation of this offensive alliance and such an unequivocal proof of it as should be satisfactory to the whole world; and the adoption of arrangements which should facilitate the usual friendly communications between states not hostile to one another' (*Supp. Desp.*, Vol. IV, p. 56).

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letter¹ addressed to him in this fatal month of February 1799 must be quoted in full:

FRENCH REPUBLIC

Liberty

Equality

Head Quarters at Cairo,

7th Pluviose,

7th Year of the Republic, One and Indivisible

BUONAPARTE, Member of the National Convention, General in Chief, to the most Magnificent SULTAUN, our greatest friend, TIPP00 SAIB.

You have already been informed of my arrival on the borders of the Red Sea, with an innumerable and invincible Army, full of the desire of delivering you from the iron yoke of England.

I eagerly embrace this opportunity of testifying to you the desire I have of being informed by you, by the way of Muscat and Mocha, as to your political situation.

I would further wish you could send some intelligent Person to Suez or Cairo, possessing your confidence, with whom I may confer.

May the Almighty increase your Power and destroy your enemies.

(Signed) BUONAPARTE.

There are just three things worth saying about this famous communication: it did not in any way commit Napoleon to an Indian expedition, nor even suggest that he was planning one; at the moment when the English army entered Mysore he began the siege of Acre which was to ruin all his Levantine schemes; and the letter, which was intended to be forwarded by the Sherif of Mecca, was intercepted at Jeddah and never reached Tipu.

¹ *Official Documents*, Division B, Item 26.

Closing Act at Seringapatam

It is undeniable that the military history of Tipu and the English would follow a more dramatic course if its two peak moments were not quite so alike. The second and by much the briefer of the great Seringapatam campaigns is in truth only rescued from anti-climax by its last flamboyant scene of the death in battle of Tipu Sultan. Nevertheless, there are worthwhile comparisons to be made between the marches and skirmishes of 1791-2 and those of 1799.¹

A difference apparent at once is that the territorial gains of the Third Mysore War had provided a much better jumping-off ground for the Fourth. When Wellesley first arrived in India, Harris, wrapped in the old Madras miasma, was still talking of a southern advance via Coimbatore. But the sounder strategy was obviously to exploit the English grip on the Baramahal, and to follow the Ryaottai/Palakad Pass route which Cornwallis had eventually put to good use. Moreover, it was known that Tipu had demolished the fortifications of his two eastern strongholds, Hosur and Bangalore, so no preliminary sieges in that region need delay the time-table. Everything pointed to a swift, decisive confrontation either on the road to Seringapatam or around its walls.

Cornwallis and Harris marched from Vellore with very similar forces (about 19,000 and 21,000 men respectively), but whereas the former had to wander about north-eastern Mysore in search of the Nizam's dubiously useful cavalry, a well-appointed contingent from Hyderabad joined Harris between Ambur and Carimungalam, six days out from Vellore. It embraced not only the whole 'subsidiary force' of 6,000 English-trained sepoys, but about 4,000 of Raymond's former corps under the command of

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Beatson, *A View of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultan* (London, G. & W. Nicol, 1800) remains our most reliable and comprehensive guide to the 1799 Seringapatam campaign; the abundant dispatches, letters and diaries which also survive furnish only minor glosses on his narrative.

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Captain John Malcolm, and 6,000 of the Nizam's best horse. In order to render the contingent 'still more respectable' as Beatson puts it, it was now reinforced with the 33rd Foot, and Colonel Wellesley was given the over-all command.¹ Finally, Bombay sent up the Western Ghats an army almost exactly similar in numbers (about 6,000) and in function with Abercrombie's during the earlier campaign.

A conspicuous contrast, of course, that this time there was no Maratha army to assist, or to frustrate, the designs of the allied Commander-in-Chief. How far this was due to dissensions at Poona—Nana Fadnavis was in favour of action, Scindhia against it, the Peshwa Baji Rao torn both ways—and how far to the machinations of Tipu is an open question. Certainly the latter was active both behind the scenes and in the open. For long past he had had a secret envoy intriguing with the Peshwa behind Nana's back, and at the end of 1798 he sent two vakils, Ahmed Khan and Fakhr-ud-din, on a public embassy. Wellesley was highly indignant, and pressed Palmer to insist on their withdrawal. On the other hand, however much he hoped that the Peshwa would play his part in any war against Mysore, he had no intention of forcing a detachment upon him unless he was prepared to sign a subsidiary treaty—Wellesley's great object of policy. This scheme got nowhere, and though the Peshwa did approach Parashuram Bhau and his son, Appa Saheb, to lead an army against Tipu, both refused.

As for the vakils, in February Wellesley began to use high language to the Peshwa—'I know not the extent of the evils which may follow so unexpected a relaxation of the bonds of friendship and alliance'.² During March Ahmed Khan and Fakhr-ud-din began what might be called a token withdrawal from Poona, moving by such slow stages that by the end of April they still were within fifty miles of the Maratha capital, and the

¹ This was said to be at the particular request of the Nizam's general, Mir Alam, but it provided the first of the successive grievances of Major-General Baird against Colonel Wellesley during the campaign. In spite of his rank, Baird only commanded a brigade (the other brigade commanders were colonels), and he considered he should have been given this conspicuous post. In *Wellington—The Years of the Sword* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969) Elizabeth Longford points out (p. 48) that as long before as 1797 Baird had resented Wellesley being preferred to him in the expedition against Manila.

² *Despatches*, Feb. 24th, 1799.

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dreary web of intrigue and double-dealing was still being woven when Seringapatam fell.

So in practice the 'Allied armies', as Wellesley liked to style them, consisted of the English and the contingent from Hyderabad. Harris, having mounted the Ghats and entered Mysore by the main road to Hosor, expected to find Tipu somewhere between Chennapatna and the Maddur river which, it will be remembered, crosses the line of any advance from the east towards Seringapatam. He had in fact been encamped there with about 12,000 of his best troops until as late as March 3rd. At that point, having received no reply to his letter to Wellesley of February 13th, he decided that he must strike a swift blow in self-defence.

Moving with all his old mobility, he covered the sixty miles to Periapatam near the Coorg frontier, in under three days. Here he was within seven miles of the most advanced element of the Bombay army—a brigade of three native infantry battalions under Lieutenant-Colonel Montresor which occupied a post of observation on Siddesvara hill, just inside Coorg. Lieutenant-General Stuart, with the main body, was eight miles further back, and at first suspected no danger. So far as he knew Tipu was far away on the other side of Seringapatam and the only enemy troops in the neighbourhood were a few thousand men under Muhammad Raza (the Binky Nabob) near the ford of Kannambadi. Even when, on the morning of the 5th, Colonel Montresor's sentries saw a few tents being pitched between them and Periapatam they felt no tremor. But the encampment thickened during the day, and towards evening there was descried in the midst that large green enclosure which had so often marked the presence of Tipu Sultan. Stuart remained sceptical, but as a precaution sent an extra battalion forward to Montresor.

Between nine and ten o'clock the next morning the storm burst. A frontal attack was supported by substantial parties of the enemy who during the night had crept through the jungle to Montresor's flanks and rear. Stuart, who already had his troops under arms, set off at once with a strong detachment. He found the native infantry hard-pressed but resisting stoutly, and within an hour of his arrival, the Mysoreans were in retreat towards Periapatam. They had suffered at least 1,500 casualties (the English had 143 killed, wounded and missing) and among the dead was the Binky Nabob. He had led the attack and was thus the

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second of Tipu's 'family generals' (after Burhan-ud-din at Cheyur) to die in his service. Perhaps it was the alert given by that famous green tent which robbed Tipu of his last chance of a surprise success against the English, though even if he had succeeded in knocking out Montresor, it seems unlikely that he could have given the whole Bombay army a bloody nose. But it was a brave try.¹

Tipu remained at Periapatam until the 11th, when he retired upon Seringapatam to regroup. The only question now was whether he would intercept Harris, or await him in his last citadel. He attempted the first, but was compelled to the second.

The allied host, observed only by a small force under Saiyid Saheb and Purnaiya, had continued meanwhile on its ponderous course. Harris never suffered the extreme distresses of Cornwallis, though he complained much of 'wretched' cattle, and the very completeness of his equipment made his army perhaps the most unwieldy that the English ever put into the field, even in India. Apart from the camp followers outnumbering the fighting men by at least five to one, the addition of the Nizam's forces and their hangers-on meant that the government bullocks alone now exceeded *ninety-six thousand*, besides an unaccounted multitude on private hire. Let us take one more view through the eyes of a young British officer:²

The appearance of our army on the march from a neighbouring hill is truly surprising. It may be compared with the emigration of the Israelites from Egypt; the surrounding plains and downs appear to be in motion. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep conceal the soil; the route of the troops is marked by the gleaming of their arms, and that of the battering train by a long slow-moving line. . . . A laden, ill-bred bullock scampers off, twenty others follow, and broken pots and pans strew the plain.

However, by March 14th this peripatetic city came to rest some nine miles west of Bangalore. From here Harris, like Cornwallis

¹ Among those who watched the battle was the high-spirited young Raja of Coorg, who wrote an ecstatic account of it to Wellesley (Beatson, Appendix XXI).

² Ensign Rowley. A letter from him, dated from 'Sultan Pettah, before Seringapatam', is quoted in Major H. M. Vibart, *Military History of the Madras Engineers and Pioneers* (London, W. H. Allen, 1881).

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before him, could use any of three routes to Seringapatam—south via Kankanhalli, which was Cornwallis's first choice (1791), north via Savandurga, which was his second (1792), and centre via Chennapatna, where Tipu invariably concentrated to watch the other two. Harris chose the first, and Tipu, hearing that the English were advancing by the southern road, marched to the Maddur river. Mohibbul Hasan considers that he could have made things very difficult for Harris at this heavily wooded crossing, but he preferred to fight in more open ground and withdrew to Malvalli, a few miles west. A skirmish between advance guards led to a general action in which the Mysorean infantry won the admiration of Colonel Wellesley and other English officers, and Tipu himself led a spirited cavalry charge. But the outcome was as at Seddesvara—the army of Mysore had to use their superior nimbleness to retire towards Seringapatam.

There are two important glosses on this fight. Buchanan (Vol. II, p. 498) says that certain officers sent forward to reconnoitre by Tipu brought him back sycophantic reports that the English force was merely an advance guard which he could easily cut up, and before he learnt the truth, he had pushed his guns so far forward that he had either to abandon them or to engage. Not wishing to dispirit his people, he launched an attack to cover the withdrawal of the artillery, and in this he succeeded, but at heavy cost. But Mohibbul Hasan¹ (mainly following Kirmani) suggests that it was the collusion of Saiyid Saheb, Purnaiya and Qamar-ud-din with the English which was at least partly to blame. This theme of Tipu being misled either by flatterers or traitors now becomes vital, and we shall soon be returning to it.

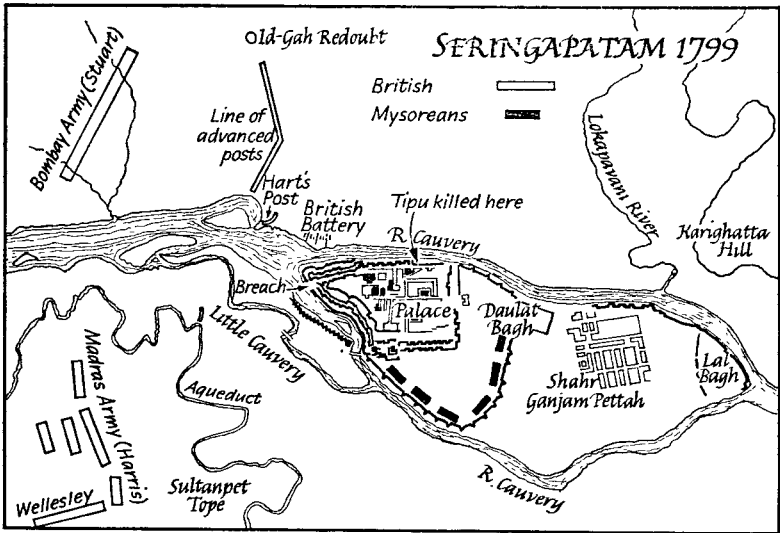
It seems that after falling back from Malvalli, he intended to dispute the English advance again, somewhat further along the same route. He was given no chance. Harris's next move was surprising, not so much as a piece of strategy, but because it was precisely that which Cornwallis had attempted to do and failed—to swing south across the Cauvery below Seringapatam. His reasoning was the same too; he wanted to outflank Tipu's defensive positions and to make a secure rendezvous with the Bombay Army. The great difference was that this time the English scouts seem to have had no difficulty in finding a practicable ford. In the last few days of March Harris got his mixed multitude across the

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 310, 312.

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river at a place called Sosile, about fifteen miles from Seringapatam, and crawling forward in a continued left-handed detour, came to his ground on April 5th about three miles south-west of the city and in sight of its battlements.

Since the fighting of 1792, Tipu had done something, but not enough, to strengthen the defences of his fortress. Unfortunately, he concentrated on the eastern face, looking towards the main



MAP 4

mass of the island, which had been occupied by Cornwallis's troops after the battle on the north bank of the Cauvery. These eastern walls were now protected against enfilading fire, and a strong entrenchment had been carried right across the island from the Daulat Bagh garden to the Periapattam bridge. It may be noted that beyond this entrenchment there was almost a desert—the bazaars of the Shahr Ganjam suburb had been reduced to ruin so as not to provide cover, and the splendid gardens of the Lal Bagh at the eastern extremity had never been replanted since its cypresses¹ were used by Cornwallis's troops for fascines and as

¹ 'Beautiful rows of trees, clean-pruned and not a sucker to be seen,' as an arboriculturally-minded subaltern, Lieutenant Nuthall, wrote home to his mother in Palace Yard, Westminster, on Feb. 21st, 1792. He added that the Grand Walk of the gardens was sixty yards wide—'larger than the Mall in St. James's Park' (Home Misc. 251, I.O.R.).

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fuel. The southern side of the citadel, towards the other arm of the Cauvery, was already fairly strong, with piled-up masses of masonry, while at the sharp north-western angle a new bastion had been constructed and some progress had been made with an inner rampart, protected by a deep ditch. The great weakness of this part of the defences was that both the outer and inner lines could be enfiladed from the north (and more obliquely from the south), and nothing had been done to counteract this.

By the time Harris was ready to go into action, Tipu's forces were disposed partly within the entrenchment bisecting the island and partly in some hastily erected works on the south bank. Here they faced their enemies across an aqueduct which, leaving the Cauvery near Kannambadi ford, wandered eastwards until it reached the village of Sultanpet,¹ to the right of the English line. At this point there was a large tope, or grove, which gave shelter to Tipu's rocket men and had obviously to be cleaned out before the siege could be pressed closer to Seringapatam island. The commander chosen for this operation was Colonel Wellesley, but advancing towards the tope after dark on the 5th, he was set upon with rockets and musket-fire, lost his way and as Beatson politely puts it, had to 'postpone the attack . . . until a more favourable opportunity should offer'. And so arose Baird's second grievance against the Governor-General's brother; not only was Wellesley's failure glossed over later by Beatson and other chroniclers, but the next morning he failed to report when a force was being paraded to renew the attack. Harris offered the command to Baird, who (by his own account) chivalrously refused to take it in case Wellesley turned up, which in due course he did. But over this again Beatson was silent.²

In any case the tope was now carried, and as other detachments

¹ Out of some richly diversified spellings, this one avoids confusion with Sultanpettah, a larger place near the Maddur river and on the line of Cornwallis's and Harris's advance by the southern route.

² Theodore Hook (*op. cit.*) was constantly accused by the Duke of Wellington's later admirers of a partisan treatment of the various Baird/Wellesley clashes. Stephen Lushington in his *Life of General Lord Harris* (London, 1840), written largely to refute Hook, says that in his last days Baird admitted that there was no unfairness in this particular incident; Harris and he agreed to allow a few minutes 'law' to Wellesley, who by an oversight had not been warned for duty. But anything may have happened during those few edgy moments at dawn, after the failure of the night attack.

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had cleared further enemy posts along the aqueduct, it was possible to form a coherent line two miles long and less than 1,000 yards from the southern battlements of Seringapatam. Still in front, however, was not only the Cauvery itself, but a minor branch or nullah called the Little Cauvery, almost parallel with it, and between these two streams the Mysoreans held strong emplacements from which they were not to be ejected until about April 20th. Important though such operations were, if batteries were to be trained at close range upon the citadel, this was not to be the sector of ultimate decision. Harris had something less obvious up his sleeve.

I mentioned earlier that the north-west angle of the citadel was its weakest point, partly because of its unfinished fortifications and partly because it was open to enfilade. After prolonged arguments, in which Major Beatson at first fought single-handed against Colonel Sartorius and the other experts,¹ Harris agreed with him that while continuing to work their way towards the Cauvery's southern stretches, the final assault should be made upon the extreme western point of the island. It was true that the river was thought to have rather more water in it here, but Harris's scouts had frequently watched men and animals wading across without difficulty. Moreover, there was a fresh army available to cover our enfilading batteries sited on the north bank. On April 6th Floyd (now Major-General and Second-in-Command to Harris) had set off for Periapatam to meet Stuart and to bring him forward to Seringapatam—what memories he must have had of an exactly similar errand to link up with Abercrombie seven years before! Qamar-ud-din, with almost the whole Mysorean cavalry, hovered on his flank but did not attack him. Caution or collaboration, who knows? By the 14th Floyd and Stuart were at Seringapatam, and Harris immediately despatched Stuart to the north bank. The position he took up was on high ground immediately west of the Id-gah hill which Meadows captured, more or less by mistake, at the start of that wild night of February 6th, 1792. Floyd trotted off again to escort Colonels Read and Brown, who had arrived at the top of the Ghats with their precious convoys.

The realisation that all his eastern and southern defences were going to be useless was a severe shock to Tipu. He was not actually

¹ For the full story of this contention, see the *East India Military Calendar* (entry BEATSON).

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short of troops. Though the Mysorean army had been reduced since the partition of the kingdom in 1792, and there is no evidence of a build-up prior to the Fourth Mysore War (which disposes of Wellesley's constantly expressed belief that Tipu was poised for aggression), it can be reckoned that at the end of April he had about 36,000 men under arms—14,000 in the fort, 8,000 in the entrenchments outside, and about 14,000 (mainly horse) divided between Qamar-ud-din, Purnaiya and the eldest prince Fath Haidar, all of whom were operating in the English rear. But there is evidence that from the day of Seddesvara onwards, Tipu was the prey to great despondency and had no real confidence in his ability to put up a fight.

In this connection, we must resume the unhappy story of his correspondence with the enemies who had closed in on him. When he eventually read Wellesley's letter of February 13th, he must have grasped that his only hope of negotiation now lay with the English Commander-in-Chief. But as usual, he went the wrong way about it, as the following brief exchange shows:

Tipu to Harris (received April 9th)

The Governor-General, Lord Mornington Bahauder, sent me a letter copy of which is enclosed; you will understand it. I have adhered firmly to treaties; what then is the meaning of the advance of the English armies, and the occurrence of hostilities? Inform me.

What need I say more?

Harris to Tipu (despatched April 10th)

Your letter, enclosing copies of the Governor-General's letter, has been received. For the advance of the English and allied armies, and for the occurrence of hostilities, I refer you to the several letters of the Governor-General, which are sufficiently explanatory on the subject.

What need I say more?

Silence on both sides until the evening of April 20th, the day on which the north bank batteries opened fire and while a successful action against the Mysorean positions to the south was actually in progress. Tipu now sent Harris a further note:

In the letter of Lord Mornington it is written, that the clearing up of the matter at issue is proper, and that therefore you having

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been empowered for the purpose, will appoint such persons as you judge proper for conducting a conference, and resuming the business of a treaty. You are the well-wisher of both Circars. In this matter what is your pleasure? Inform me, that a conference may take place.

What can I say more?

Among a dossier of instructions to Harris, dated February 22nd, 1799, Wellesley had provided him with alternative sets of terms which might be offered if Tipu sued for peace. Draft A was to be used if the approach came before the siege proper had begun; Draft B if Tipu made no peace move until the batteries had actually opened upon Seringapatam. Each draft provided that Tipu must receive permanent ambassadors from each of the allies, break off all connections with the French, release all prisoners and surrender two of his three eldest sons as hostages. The sharp difference lay in articles 4 & 6. Whereas under Draft A Tipu was to cede to the Company the coastal area below the Western Ghats and areas of equivalent value to the other allies, and to pay an indemnity of a crore and a half of rupees, Draft B tore away half the territory left him by Cornwallis, and stepped the indemnity up to two crores.

What Harris now sent Tipu was Draft B, but with some harsh trimmings of his own. The most important of these were: that the hostages were to comprise *four* of Tipu's sons and four of his leading generals;¹ that the terms must be accepted within twenty-four hours, and the hostages and a crore of rupees sent to the allied camp within forty-eight.

Tipu was understandably shocked, and on the 28th wrote to Harris again, offering to send two vakils to discuss the 'weighty points' which had been raised. Harris replied the same day that his instructions forbade him to receive any vakils unless they brought with them Tipu's assent to the full peace terms and were followed within the specified period by the hostages and the

¹ The sons were listed by Harris as 'Sultan Padshaw, Futteh Hyder, Moyer-ud-din and Abdul Khalick'; the generals as 'Meer Kummer-ud-din, Meer Mahomed Sadik, Syed Goffar and Purneah'. As all the last four except Saiyid Ghaffar were at least under suspicion of treachery, they might be classed as good riddance! Harris, writing to Wellesley the same day, implies that the extra hostages were in lieu of certain fortresses that he was authorised to demand, but which could not be occupied in time.

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rupees. Tipu was given until 3 p.m. the next day to submit, but he sent no vakils, nor ever again addressed a letter to the English.¹

Military operations had meantime been carried forward with spirit by both sides. In the early hours of the 22nd Stuart's position on the north bank was attacked in the rear by rocket men and in front by 6,000 Mysorean infantry. With the latter, says Beatson, was 'Lally's corps of Frenchmen' who led the assault on the right, and 'behaved with great spirit, as some of them fell within the entrenchment upon our bayonets, and others were killed close to it'. As we know² that the total French force with Tipu (including the ninety-and-nine) was only 450, Beatson's tribute is virtually the epitaph of this brave small troop of mercenaries, which seems to have borne the name of its most distinguished commander till the end.

The engagement of the 22nd ended in favour of the English, and only delayed for a few days the bringing forward to the river's edge of the batteries which were to join those on the south bank in breaching the western ramparts of Seringapatam. By the 24th, the few enemy guns on this face had been silenced, and its two round towers and new north-west bastion virtually dismantled. The point chosen for the breach was about sixty yards along the western face from this bastion, but as long as fighting was going on south of the Cauvery, where some strong points changed hands several times, the batteries played on a variety of targets so as not to reveal where the final assault was to be made.

But by May 2nd all was ready, and a tremendous weight of metal was directed upon the chosen spot. On the evening of the 3rd a reconnaissance party, led by Lieutenant Lalor,³ descended into the river bed, which they found 'far from rugged or difficult to pass', the water being only a foot deep at the foot of the

¹ The Harris-Tipu correspondence is included in Wellesley's *Despatches*, but Beatson's Appendices XXII-XXIX provide a clearer sequence.

² From John Malcolm's interesting 'Abstract of the Present State of Tipu Sultan' (Wellesley, *Despatches*, I, Appendix C).

³ He was killed the next day, while acting as guide to the storming party. His Regiment (H.M.'s 74th) suffered the heaviest casualties of any unit during the period April 14th-May 4th—forty-five killed and 111 wounded. Its Grenadier companies formed part of the right-hand column.

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retaining wall. Thence they mounted onto the wreckage below the battlements, and their report was that a practicable breach had been made.

Plans for the storm were of course already complete. Baird was at last to have his hour of glory as leader, and an assault force of 4,376 men was disposed in two columns under Colonels Sherbrooke and Dunlop. These names have not so far been noticed in our story, nor have we heard anything (nor shall we again during the operations) of the two senior Major-Generals, Bridges and Popham, who commanded in the trenches and the camp respectively.

But there are plenty of familiar faces around. Harris had been Medows's Military Secretary; Baird and Gowdie (now Colonel commanding the 3rd Brigade) first came upon our scene as prisoners of Haidar Ali; James Stuart, of the long march to Dindigul in 1790, now commands the Bombay Army; Floyd of Satimungalum is still the supreme leader of light horse as well as Second-in-Command; Thomas Dallas is discovered in the utilitarian but vital role of Agent for Bullocks; Major Macleod runs the Intelligence in both campaigns; Barry Close, Deputy Adjutant-General under Cornwallis, is full-blown A.-G. under Harris; Beatson, prospector of the Mugli Pass, is Surveyor-General—a pity that his fellow-chronicler, Alexander Dirom, has already gone home to Edinburgh. These warriors' long account with Tipu Sultan is about to be closed at last.

Harris had every reason to complete his task with speed. His men were keyed up by the preliminary tussles, and though a panic over rice supplies had been resolved in a surprising manner,¹ the usual appalling mortality among the carriage bullocks was a warning of the dangers of delay. On May 4th, the day after the breach had been declared practicable, the assault troops (2,494 Europeans, 1,882 native infantry) assembled in their trenches before dawn, but zero hour was fixed for 1.30 p.m., when it was reckoned that the enemy would be at their least alert.

The panorama has come down to us in many accounts—sharp,

¹ On April 16th a re-measuring of stocks revealed a fearful deficiency, with only eighteen days' supply remaining; a week later a tender for 1,200 bullock loads was received and accepted. The suggestion is that this rice was stolen from the army, and then sold back to it! Even in 1817, Wilks is reticent over the affair, which was still giving rise to legal argument long after his day.

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brightly-coloured, strangely unreal. At the appointed moment, General Baird steps out of the trench, draws his sword, and 'in the most heroic and animating manner', calls out to his men, 'Come my brave fellows, follow me, and prove yourselves worthy of the name of British soldiers!'¹ The two columns rise up and plunge side by side into the river bed. They stumble and slide across a confusion of smooth boulders, with only an occasional shallow channel to be waded. Furious musket and rocket fire opens up, but causes few casualties. Within six minutes—it is like a dream—the assault troops have mounted the glacis, splashed knee-deep through a ditch below the ramparts, clambered to the top of the breach and raised the British colours! (Plate 20a). The breach proves to be 100 feet wide and within a few minutes more it is crammed full of redcoats, who quickly sort themselves out and swing away right and left, as their Commander-in-Chief has laid down.

The right-hand column was found to have the easier task; the few defenders fled in panic from the western ramparts which had been so heavily enfiladed, and thence along the southern face of the fortress. But behind one of the great round towers, a party of English officers came across what they thought were three bodies, evidently Mysoreans of rank. The Englishmen were Majors Beatson and Dallas—no surveying or bullock-marshalling for such men on such a day—and the Deputy Q.M.G., Major Allan. As they looked, the man at the bottom of the heap showed signs of life, so Dallas fished him out from under his companions. He was terribly wounded. Dallas took him by the hand and murmured 'Saiyid Saheb!' 'Yes it is Saiyid Saheb', replied the dying man and, being given a little water, recovered enough to ask Dallas who he was and how he recognised him. Dallas told him, and for a moment they were both back in 1784, when they met and talked on the Commissioners' march to Mangalore. Within a few minutes an enemy counter-attack forced the three officers to hurry forward. They left Saiyid Saheb in charge of two sepoys and sent for his palanquin, which was not far away. But they heard later that directly they disappeared he staggered to his feet, fell over the battlements into the ditch, and died soon after.

The left-hand column found the going much tougher. Its

¹ So Beatson, *et al.* But Ensign Rowley's prosaic version rings truer: 'Men, are you all ready?' 'Yes!' 'Then forward my lads!'

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commander, Colonel Dunlop, was severely wounded in single combat with a Mysorean grandee at the breach itself, and though the new north-western bastion quickly fell, the enemy resisted fiercely behind each of a series of traverses along the northern ramparts. This was because Tipu himself was on the spot and setting the example.

His movements on the last day of his life can be closely followed,¹ During the earlier stages of the siege his headquarters had been on the southern walls of the citadel, but when it became clear that the true threat was from the north-west, he transferred to that side, occupying a group of tents inside a bricked-up water-gate. Racked with foreboding he made much resort to the astrologers, both Moslem and Hindu. They warned him that May 4th, the last day of the lunar month, was deeply ominous to him, and urged him to make special oblations.

On the fatal morning Tipu rose early and after inspecting the breach and giving orders for repairs, he bathed and made his offerings—money and cloth to the poor; to the priest at Chennapatna a black-caparisoned elephant, a bag of oil seeds and 2,000 rupees; and to other Brahmins, two buffaloes, a bullock, a she-goat and miscellaneous articles, including an iron pot full of oil, with which he had previously performed the mysterious rite of gazing at the reflection of his own face in order to ascertain his destiny. He then returned to his post on the ramparts and had just finished his mid-day meal, sitting under a canopy, when news was brought that one of his best and most loyal officers, Saiyid Ghaffar, had been killed by a round shot on the western defences. He mounted his horse and hurried towards the breach—Kirmani makes it sound as though he rode along the glacis outside the rampart, but that seems impossible. He was too late, the assault had already started and the breach was in his enemies' hands. There was nothing for Tipu to do but to climb onto the battlements and fight for his life.

The result was certain. At first the Mysoreans had some success, but the decisive moment came when some men of the 12th Foot got possession of the inner rampart and could turn their fire on those defending the outer. Tipu called for his horse

¹ Cf. Beatson, p. 161 *et seq.*, using the testimony of Tipu's confidential servant Raja Khan, 'the only person now living who accompanied him during the whole forenoon of the 4th May'; and Kirmani, *Tipu Sultan*, p. 266 *et seq.*

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and rode off,¹ intending either to join his family in the palace or, as some think, to escape by the water-gate half-way along the northern perimeter.

Whichever way it was, Tipu eventually found himself between the water-gate and another archway leading through the inner rampart into the city. He had already received at least two bayonet wounds, and was now shot in the left breast and his horse fell under him. The devoted Raja Khan urged him to surrender to some English officer, but he flung out a proud refusal—'*Are you mad? Be silent!*' At that moment a party of redcoats forced their way into the maelstrom between the gates. The predatory eye of a grenadier was caught by the gold buckle on Tipu's belt, but he was dealing with a Tiger at bay and got a sword slash in return. Either this man or another at whom Tipu also struck shot him through the temple, and he was left to be trampled into obscurity among the dead and dying.

None of this was known to the English commanders. The plan had been that the two columns, fighting their parallel ways along the rampart, should meet above the eastern gate—that very one where Lieutenant Lindsay so nearly caught Tipu by the coat-tails in 1792. The southern party got there first, but even before they did so, Dallas and his companions were able to look down into part of the palace. Seeing various people moving about and prostrating themselves before two seated figures, they assumed that one of these must be Tipu, or at any rate that he was still in the palace. Directly they reached the eastern gate they got into touch with Baird and gave him the news. It was still only 2.30 p.m.—everything I have so far related, since the General rose out of the trench, sword in hand, had taken place within one hour!

Major Allan was deputed to lead a small party into the palace and obtain Tipu's surrender, and here his personal narrative takes over.² Allan tells (with a wealth of detail for which there is no room here) how he walked towards the palace carrying a white cloth tied to a sergeant's pike. He noticed some of Tipu's people

¹ Beatson says that Tipu, looking down from the rampart, saw one of his favourite horses, and mounted it. As in the affair of the Travancore Lines, this riding about by Tipu in such wildly unfavourable circumstances seems difficult to credit, especially as the maximum distance he had to cover either towards or away from the breach can hardly have exceeded half a mile.

² Beatson, Appendix XLII.

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watching him from a balcony and then Mir Nadim, the Killedar, and other officers climbed down to him by an unfinished wall. They were anxious and confused, and Allan thought their aim was perhaps to keep him in play while Tipu escaped. To them, and to everyone else he met, he promised their lives in exchange for instant surrender.

Allan's party then got over the wall and found themselves in a courtyard full of armed men. To impress them with the genuineness of his message he handed his sword to the Killedar, who took it unwillingly. All the officials affirmed that Tipu's family were in the palace but that he himself was not. The English troops could now be heard milling about outside, and Allan was begged to hold the white flag high. Successive messages were sent of the still invisible princes, and at last a reply came that as soon as a carpet could be spread they would receive the English officers. After a further delay, Allan was admitted and there, seated on the carpet, were Muiz-ud-din ('whom I had seen delivered up with his brother hostage to Lord Cornwallis') and another son of Tipu, whose name is not given by Allan or anybody else. Allan took the former by the hand and assuring him of his own safety, told him that his father's life could only be preserved by an instant revelation of his whereabouts. Muiz-ud-din stuck to the story that 'the Padshaw' was not in the palace.

In spite of the general panic, Allan persuaded the princes to let the gates be opened. General Baird stood outside. He did not enter, but ordered the young men to be brought before him. There followed the famous scene¹ in which Baird, incensed by the news of the massacre of prisoners (see p. 266) and perhaps by memories of his own long captivity a few hundred yards from the spot, is supposed to have violated (or meditated violation of) Allan's pledged word to the Princes, by threatening them with death unless they disclosed their father's hiding place. If so, it was no more than a passing impulse, because Muiz-ud-din and his brother were in fact treated with kindness and sent away under honourable escort.

The palace was ransacked but no trace was found of Tipu, and there was nothing for it but to begin a hunt among the dead. It

¹ Celebrated by Sir Henry Newbolt in a once-popular but now slightly old-fashioned ballad (Appendix III). Baird himself, in his Seringapatam despatch (Wellesley, *Despatches*, Vol. I, Appendix I) says that he 'hesitated' over honouring Allan's pledge.

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was night by the time the searchers, headed by General Baird himself, reached the spot where it was thought he might be. An endless process now began of dragging bodies out for identification, and eventually Allan and Colonel Wellesley penetrated into the gateway, choked with the human debris of defeat. There they found Tipu's palanquin, and under it a man still breathing. It was not, as they thought at first, Tipu himself, but Raja Khan. He pointed to the spot where his master lay, and at last the torches revealed the body of the ruler of Mysore. He had not long been dead—Allan's testimony must be given in his own words:

His eyes were open and the body was so warm that for a few moments Colonel Wellesley and myself were doubtful whether he was not alive; on feeling his pulse and heart, that doubt was removed. He had four wounds, three in the body and one in the temple; the ball having entered a little above the right ear, and lodged in the cheek.

His dress consisted of a jacket of fine white linen, loose drawers of flowered chintz, with a crimson cloth of silk and cotton round his waist; a handsome pouch with a red and green silk belt hung across his shoulder; his head was uncovered, his turban being lost in the confusion of his fall; he had an amulet¹ on his arm, but no ornament whatever.

The body was placed in the palanquin and carried to the palace, where his officers and eunuchs, crowding round, recognised it as that of their master.

The rest of the night was given up by the English soldiery to plunder, atrocities and fire-raising. It has to be said that they had less excuse than usual, since there had not been that obstinate resistance to a storm which, by the queer ethics of eighteenth-century warfare, entitled an army to sack a captured town; exaggerated reports of the prisoners' fate were perhaps a factor on the other side.

The comparative ease with which Seringapatam was taken is reflected in the victor's losses—the total killed between April 4th

¹ It was removed and given to General Baird, and survives to this day (p. 360).

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and May 4th inclusive was exactly 300 (181 Europeans and 119 Indians), and the wounded and missing amounted to another 1,200; some of these casualties, of course, were incurred during such preliminary actions as Arthur Wellesley's unlucky attempt on the Sultanpet tope. The question must be asked whether any agency was at work, other than military power and fine leadership on the one side, and some degree of weakness and defective strategy on the other.

Mark Wilks, drawing on many a conversation with the garrison's leading survivors, represents Tipu as surrounded and misled by a set of ignorant sycophants, who all along underestimated the strength of the besiegers, and in the final crisis persuaded him that the enemy would never attack by daylight. He also mentions the folly of the Killedar, Mir Nadim, in holding a pay parade at the very moment of assault. But this episode, along with several others, is open to a totally different interpretation—that with the exception of Saiyid Ghaffar and the French Chef-de-Brigade Chapuis (who now almost justified his forlorn excursion from Mauritius), practically all Tipu's leading advisers were to one degree or another in league with the English.

I have already mentioned, in connection with Malvalli, that the three principal commanders there, Saiyid Saheb, Purnaiya, and Qamar-ud-din, are under suspicion of having deliberately let Tipu down. Of these, only the first was in Seringapatam during the siege, and he at least fell fighting. Purnaiya and Qamar-ud-din commanded flying columns outside, and caused notably little inconvenience to Floyd and the convoys. The most sinister figure in Tipu's entourage was Mir Sadik.¹ Mohibbul Hasan accuses him not only of having ordered that untimely pay parade, but of having arranged with the English (perhaps during Lalor's reconnaissance) the best moment for the assault and even of having given the signal for it with a white handkerchief. He is also said to have ordered the water-gate to be shut to prevent Tipu from escaping. The only authority for these details, which instantly recall the stories about Krishna Rao at Bangalore in 1791, seems to be Kirmani.²

So what is the truth? The evidence for *some* degree of treachery

¹ Tipu's Finance Minister. To refer to him as the 'Dewan' in the sense of Prime Minister, is misleading.

² See Mohibbul Hasan, pp. 327-9; Kirmani, *Tipu Sultan*, p. 265 *et seq.*

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is that Qamar-ud-din and Mir Sadik, at any rate, were incontrovertibly in touch with the English before the outbreak of the Fourth Mysore War, and were prepared to desert, if not to betray, their master. To quote just two of the abundant proofs: in a letter of October 31st 1798, Arthur Wellesley discusses in a completely matter-of-fact way with his brother Henry the problem of what ought to be done about a request by Mir Sadik to Lord Clive that he might be allowed to 'come into the Carnatic and throw himself upon the protection of the English' (Arthur sees little advantage and some likely embarrassment in the plan, and nothing seems to have come of it). Then, as late as February 16th 1799,¹ when advising the Governor-General on how to reply to one of Tipu's letters, he enters with equal coolness into the pros and cons of making use of the defection of leading Mysoreans, and remarks that this must depend on the basis on which 'the negotiation with Cummer-u-Deen' and with the 'disaffected sect of Mussulmans' is being carried out. There is not the same evidence with regard to Purnaiya, but he was almost certainly involved in a plot detected by Tipu and suppressed in 1797; a suggestion that he was supplying information to the English as far back as 1789 remains unproved.²

Against is the fact that, in contemporary Indian terms, commerce with the other side (just in case victory went that way) was not in the least uncommon and did not necessarily imply active betrayal. Purnaiya and Qamar-ud-din 'came in' with alacrity after Tipu's death; the former was reincarnated almost overnight as the trusted, and later famous, Dewan of the next régime, and both were well looked after financially—but so were other surviving Mysorean grandees against whom no suspicion of treason lies. Mir Sadik is a somewhat different case. Even at the time, he was under deep suspicion of working against his master. One of the stories about him is that his name was at the top of a list of traitors whom Tipu intended to hang just before the fortress fell and, being warned, Mir Sadik hurried that event forward so as to forestall the noose. What is almost certain is that

¹ Both letters are in Wellington, *Supp. Desp.*, Vol. I, pp. 125-6 and 193-4.

² See correspondence in P.R.O. 30/11/72 *et seq.* Alexander Dirom was convinced that letters from Purnaiya forwarded to him by a certain Charles Loyd ('an impudent illiterate imposter') were forgeries. But Loyd's choice of Purnaiya's name is interesting, all the same.

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he was killed by his own troops as a traitor, and his corpse savagely mangled. 'Even after he was buried,' says Mohibbul Hasan, 'his body was dug up and for two weeks had dirt flung at it by men, women and children.' In the popular parlance of Mysore, a traitor is a 'Mir Sadik' to this day.

Perhaps the strongest reason for doubting whether active collusion had much to do with the swift fall of Seringapatam is that there is not the slightest hint of it in any eye-witness account. Given that Wellesley and his generals might prefer not to admit that their glorious victory was partially gained by treachery, it seems quite impossible that every one lower down conspired to suppress such incidents as that of the white handkerchief. Nor, heaven knows, did the 'establishment', then and later, lack enemies in the Press and in politics who would have enjoyed themselves spreading denigratory rumours, had there been any floating about.

Mohibbul Hasan makes a good deal of the correspondence of William Petrie.¹ In a letter to a friend in England, this Madras Member of Council implied that there was more in the affair than met the eye; he intended to speak and write about it with great caution, but he could not forget 'on how many slender hairs and threads the fortunes of this great event have been suspended, almost any of which breaking would have dangerously retarded, if not entirely frustrated the grand object of the measure'. But this could refer to many things besides treachery—it would read particularly aptly, for example, if Petrie had knowledge of the rice scandal which so nearly caused disaster. Pending any other facts turning up, the severest possible verdict that can be brought is 'not proven'.

¹ See p. 205, n. 2. Petrie tended to the same 'fee-fi-fo-fum' approach during the Vellore Mutiny of 1805.

The Rajah's Return

THE sun of May 5th rose on a sleepless and ravaged city. The restoration of order in Seringapatam was the first need, and this devolved upon Colonel Wellesley, not, as might be expected, upon General Baird. Gurwood, editor of the former's *Despatches*, states that 'Major-General Baird having desired to be relieved, Colonel Wellesley, being next on the roster, was ordered to command within the fort'.¹ The basis for the first half of this statement is that Baird does seem to have suggested that someone should take over from him and the tired assault party during the night, and there may have been a technical sense in which a junior colonel who did not take part in the storm (Wellesley commanded the reserve) was 'next on the roster'. The hard fact is that this overnight 'command within the fort' evolved within forty-eight hours into the conspicuous and lucrative post of Commandant of Seringapatam, and Baird, apprised of his supersession during breakfast on the 6th, was left with his bitterest grievance yet. If the appointment was in fact a 'job', it was worked on the spot by Harris, out of policy, rather than from a distance by Richard Wellesley, out of brotherly love. But one has to acknowledge that Davie Baird, that rough-and-ready soldier, might have been a disaster as Commandant, and that the good order and good faith which now descended upon this distracted scene gave the world its first proof of the practical genius of the future Duke of Wellington.

Meanwhile, he had to stop the looting! His own account (in a letter to the Governor-General on the 8th) has often been quoted:

Scarcely a house was left unplundered . . . I came in to take command on the morning of the 5th and by the greatest exertion, hanging, flogging etc., etc., in the course of the day I restored order among the troops and I hope I have gained the confidence of the people.

¹ Vol. I, p. 36.

TIGER OF MYSORE

The number of hangings did not in fact exceed four, and brief notes to Harris datelined 10 a.m. (this is the one that has the postscript about tigers), 12.30 p.m. and some time in the evening plot the swift return to sanity. Next day Wellesley is able to report:

Plunder is stopped, the fires are extinguished. I am now employed in burying the dead.

But it was on the 5th, with the fires still smouldering, that the most poignant burial had taken place. It had a grotesque and discreditable prelude. Entering the outer courtyard of the palace during the morning, Major Price¹ noticed a crowd round some object. He approached,

and there, on one of the short common doolies, intended for women, with his knees bent up almost double, I beheld the remains of the once-dreaded Sultan.

Price noted Tipu's complexion, 'fair for his caste', his bandaged shoulder, his delicate hands and feet, his face shaved clean except for moustachios on the upper lip. These the Major had cause to remember—before he had time to collect himself, an officer standing by had borrowed his penknife and snipped one of them away! The miscreant's excuse was that he had promised the souvenir to 'his friend Dr. Cruso, of our Establishment'. Though a palanquin arrived at that moment to carry Tipu's body into the zenana, Price feared that the deed was not unobserved, nor would it be forgotten.

It was at half past four that same afternoon that the funeral procession of Tipu Sultan set out from his palace for the Mausoleum of Haidar Ali in the Lal Bagh gardens. Two companies of European grenadiers preceded the bier, Abdul Khaliq (who had surrendered that morning) rode behind it as chief mourner, and minute guns marked its progress through prostrate and lamenting crowds. Mir Alam and other Hyderabad chiefs were waiting at the mausoleum, where the grenadiers formed up in two files, and presented arms while the body of Tipu was carried in and laid beside his father's. Before evening, a thunderstorm of the utmost violence chimed with the mood of a superstitious people.²

¹ *Op. cit.* Pp. 426–50 cover his experiences as a Seringapatam Prize Agent.

² The funeral ceremony was paid for by the Commissioners. It cost £571 4s.

THE RAJA'S RETURN

Alas we must return to the question of loot—this time the more legitimate if not more praiseworthy kind known as ‘booty and plunder’. Harris had rather casually turned over the whole contents of Tipu’s treasuries and store-houses to the Prize Committee (Chairman, General Floyd). The Governor-General, believing that the sum involved was enormous, pointed out that there was all the difference in the world between sharing out any cash and goods found in a captured fortress and the army laying claim to what were in effect the reserve funds of a still opulent State. In point of fact, the total value of the specie, jewels, military and other stores spared by the pillagers of Seringapatam seems to have been about £2,000,000, and of this just over half was eventually treated as prize. Harris, as Commander-in-Chief, considered he was entitled to one-eighth, i.e. £142,902, and made good his claim, in spite of the argument of the Prize Committee (and later of the East India Company, which brought an unsuccessful action against him in Chancery) that according to the best precedents half of this should have been shared with any other general officers in the field—in this case presumably Floyd, Stuart, Bridges, Popham and Baird. They all did very well, however, and the ‘rapacity’ of the senior commanders in 1799 was felt to contrast sharply with the behaviour of Cornwallis and Medows at the end of an infinitely more exacting campaign.

Major Price gives us a first-hand account of how he and the six other Prize Agents went about their business. They were staggered by what they found in Tipu’s Treasury. The first day of counting alone yielded one million, two hundred thousand sultany pagodas, all neatly sealed up in bags of 1,000, ‘the equivalent of 68 lakhs of rupees or nearly half a million sterling’.¹ And this in spite of a night of looting which had left ‘a trail of pagodas from the floor of the depot to the entrance of the court’. Jewels, too, had disappeared wholesale,² yet the value of those which the Prize Agents recorded was reckoned by them at not less than £360,000 sterling.

¹ Sos says Price, but if as mentioned on p. xii, the sultany pagoda was worth 10s., the first day’s count must have reached £600,000.

² Dodwell (*Nabobs of Madras*, p. 67) tells the story of a private of the 74th who is said to have found a pair of Tipu’s armlets, set with great diamonds. He passed them on for 1,500 rupees to a surgeon, who after carrying them round his waist for two years, sold them for a sum which brought him in an annual income of £2,000. Out of this he not ungenerously allowed the private £200. Price says that the surgeon’s name was Mair.

TIGER OF MYSORE

The result was that even the most senior field officers had to take part of their prize money in jewels. Colonel Wellesley received nearly a third of his entitlement of 10,000 pagodas in this form, but he was nevertheless able to offer to repay the money advanced by his brother for the purchase of his lieutenant-colonelcy; Richard generously said he was in no hurry. All this led to some slightly undignified episodes. General Harris himself challenged the Prize Agents over a 'gorgeous' emerald necklace which had been valued at 50,000 sultanies but which he declared was full of flaws; alternative baubles were supplied to him. General Baird's large ruby ring turned out to be a lump of coloured glass, but luckily Major Price had written 'if real' against his valuation of 1,000 sultanies. Thomas Dallas, grouching over his festoon of slightly tarnished pearls, got little satisfaction, and when Major-General Popham declared that his diamonds were mere glass chippings, he was told to have them priced in the bazaar. They finally fetched 1,000 sultanies more than the Prize Agents' estimate, but 'he did not return the surplus'.

Apart from these delicate questions of prize, there was voluble correspondence between the men on the spot and the Governor-General about the fascinating contents of Tipu's palace. Though so much had been grabbed by individual soldiers, quantities of beautiful or curious objects remained, and the most important of them were reserved (or in some cases bought back) as presents for the British Royal Family or the Directors of the H.E.I.C. The latter, of course, received 'Tippoo's Tiger', together with numerous items from the palace Wardrobe. Later Wellesley took charge of Tipu's personal clothing, to prevent it being distributed as sacred relics to potential rebels—'84 turbans, 50 pocket-handkerchiefs, 26 caps and two green war helmets dipped in the fountain of Zum-Zum and deemed to be invulnerable', and so on.

Of the more substantial items, it will be recalled that Tipu's throne was broken up—to the regret of the Governor-General, who wrote from Fort St. George that that if it could be put together again it ought to be purchased by the Company for the King. But by that time the gold with which its wooden structure was covered—'precious metal of the highest touch . . . of the thickness I should conceive of a sheet of lead' (Price)—had been divided into parcels of a value of 360 sultanies (£180) each, or one-third of a subaltern's share. However, in addition to the

THE RAJA'S RETURN

golden Tiger Head previously described. Windsor Castle still houses the exquisitely jewelled Bird of Paradise (*huma*), which used to hover over the canopy of the throne (Plate 15a). This had already been allocated to Colonel Gent, of the Engineers, and had to be bought back from him for £1,760.

In *Tippoo's Tiger* Mrs. Archer writes very interestingly about the establishment of hunting cheetahs, three of which were sent to George III, accompanied by six keepers, a bullock cart and two trained bullocks. His Majesty does not seem to have tested their skill—deterred perhaps by the memory that another cheetah, sent him by Lord Pigot forty years before and the subject of a famous picture by George Stubbs,¹ refused to perform in the presence of an enormous crowd in Windsor Great Park.

As hinted in my Prologue, a multiplicity of swords was found. One which was in Tipu's bedchamber was formally presented by Harris to Major-General Baird, as a small plaster for his bruised feelings—it is now an object of pilgrimage at the Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh (Plate 13c); another, which he was supposed to have carried in battle, was handed to Lord Wellesley by Major Allan, the first officer to reach Madras from Seringapatam; a third—more exactly a dagger (Plate 13d), was voted by the Army to Lord Cornwallis, along with a sword which had belonged to Morari Rao and one of Tipu's war helmets. Cornwallis was Governor-General in Ireland by the time Harris himself brought these trophies home and somewhat dramatically sent them ashore at the Cove of Cork from the Indiaman *Manship* on June 30th 1800.² For their subsequent history see Appendix V.

A capture of unique interest and importance was Tipu's Library. It comprised over 2,000 volumes, with theology as the predominant subject, followed by poetry, history, mathematics and jurisprudence. Some of them were finely illuminated manuscripts in Persian, Arabic, Urdu or Hindi, 'liberated' on such occasions as Haidar Ali's seizure of Chittoor from members of the Muhammad Ali family during the Second Mysore War.

Captain Price, accompanied by Major Ogg of the Madras Establishment, found the collection in a dark room on the upper verandah of the palace quadrangle. He comments that instead of

¹ Sold at Sotheby's, London, on March 18th, 1970, for £220,000. The association of this picture with the Pigot cheetah is currently in question.

² Cornwallis, *Despatches*, Vol. III, pp. 151 and 275.

TIGER OF MYSORE

being beautifully arranged 'as in the Bodleian', the books and manuscripts were heaped together in leather-covered hampers, and it was necessary to discharge the whole contents onto the floor. There came a mutter from one of the young Princes, who had been permitted to look on: 'Only see how these hogs are allowed to contaminate my father's books!'

It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that many of the volumes were in poor condition, with the first and last pages missing. Tipu's own interest in letters is, however, attested by the survival of some forty-five books either commissioned by him or translated under his patronage.¹ In addition, of course, there was his 'Dream Book', from which we quoted earlier, and a store of official documents, carefully indexed.

The disposal of such spoil was, perhaps, the least of the problems which confronted the English in Mysore, but Lord Wellesley was not the man to let them be scamped or bungled. Even before the armies marched he had appointed a Commission consisting of Close, Malcolm, Arthur Wellesley and Colonel Agnew to help Harris on political matters, and in particular, to consider such overtures as might be received from 'the subjects of Tippoo Sultan (of whatever class)'. After the fall of Seringapatam, this commission was disbanded, and the widest powers given to another in which Harris, Close, and Arthur Wellesley were joined by Henry Wellesley and William Kirkpatrick, whom the Governor-General had just sent up from Madras. Captains Malcolm and Munro were joint Secretaries, and (as Thompson and Garratt¹ justly remark) Mysore was put on its feet again by a group whose brilliance 'equalled that of the famous band who settled the Punjab fifty years later'.²

Everything hinged, of course, on the broad political settlement. There were really three choices: the whole territory could be

¹ The best authority is still the *Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the late Tippoo Sultan of Mysore*, compiled by Charles Stewart, 'Professor of Oriental Languages at the Honourable East India Company's College at Hertford' (Cambridge, 1809). Price himself was a laborious Persian scholar, but he does not seem to have worked on the Library. About one-tenth of the books were sent home as presents to the Company or the Royal Family, and many more were given to Wellesley's new College of Fort William at Calcutta. They are now widely dispersed.

Stewart appends to his Catalogue a useful short Memoir of Haidar and Tipu.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 212.

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annexed, and carved up among the victors; the Haidar/Tipu dynasty could be continued in the person of Fath Haidar or another of the princes; or the former ruling house, the Wadeyars, could be restored. Wellesley dismissed the first course out of hand, because he foresaw the tensions which would arise at Hyderabad and Poona. The members of the Commission, who had early brought Purnaiya into consultation, at first favoured the second—only by maintaining continuity, he and they argued, could Mysore's remaining leaders, and in particular the army, be conciliated. But to Wellesley any scion of the house of Tipu was a potential centre of plotting; as he grew up he might develop the family trait of ambition and even (the Governor-General's darling bugbear) form a new alliance with the French!

So, within weeks, the third plan was adopted. The whole Tipu family was to be pensioned off and removed from Mysore, and the remains of the kingdom, after the allies had annexed anything they wanted, was to be handed back to its ancient rulers annexed nominally as a fief from the Emperor.

All eyes now turned towards the little building ('a kind of stable with a few sheds attached to it', as Henry Wellesley described it) where the current representative of the Wadeyars and nine female relatives¹ were struggling to keep up appearances on the equivalent of £885 per annum—perhaps £5,000 in modern currency.

The last prince of this house whom Tipu had even nominally recognised was Khasa Chamaraja. He had died in 1796 ('poisoned' was the inevitable rumour, but Wilks says smallpox), after a short, sad life in which he had been kept immersed in the enervating atmosphere of the zenana and only exhibited once a year as a sort of totem. By chance, one of these occasions (the Dassara Festival of 1783) is described in the *Narrative of an Officer*. The English prisoners watched with intense curiosity as the curtains of the palace balcony were drawn back and the Raja—'quite black but very comely'—was discovered seated on a throne. Numerous attendants fanned him, scattered perfume on his long black hair and plied him with 'betel and other narcotics'. The boy of nine sat motionless for hours while tumblers, musicians, and gladiators performed before him. When all was over he advanced to the front of the balcony and stood there for a few

¹ They included, according to Beatson, five widows of the late Raja.

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minutes while his people 'honoured him with profound and even superstitious reverence'.

But after Khasa Chamaraja's death, there was a dreary interregnum. The remaining members of the family were hustled out of their palace and into a mean dwelling (perhaps the 'kind of stable') and were robbed of every valuable down to their personal jewellery. The heir apparent was a child of two, Chamaraja's son Krishnaraja, and he cried so bitterly when they tried to take away his little gold bracelets that he was allowed to keep them. This was the lad whom Wellesley was now to place upon the *musnud* of his ancestors. The ancient city of Mysore, not Seringapatam, was to be his capital, and, after consultation with the astrologers, June 30th was chosen as his installation day.

With these decisions taken, action could be pursued on all fronts. It was obviously desirable that the family of Tipu should be removed from the scene as soon as possible. Wellesley ordained that, as a matter of policy, they should be handsomely, even lavishly, provided for. An annual sum of 224,000 pagodas was allotted to the maintenance of the twelve princes and their entourage, and Vellore was named as their place of residence. On June 19th the four senior princes, Fath Haidar, Abdul Khaliq, Muiz-ud-din, and Muin-ud-din, set off in the care of Captain Marriott (A.D.C. to the C.-in-C.) and a strong escort. When they got to Vellore on the 12th, they were welcomed by Major Doveton, the obvious choice as their permanent guardian. The younger princes, who were not regarded as dangerous, followed later.

Next came the problem of Tipu's warlike relatives and his great 'sirdars'. At their head stood Qamar-ud-din and Purnaiya. The conciliation (or perhaps the reward) of the former was regarded as a great point, and the Nizam, with whom he had long been in touch, gave him the important jagir of Gurramkonda,¹ about to become Hyderabad territory at last and worth 70,000 pagodas a year. Purnaiya slipped almost at once into the post of Dewan to the boy Raja—but he had a competitor! Tirumala Rao had turned up again and was claiming the Dewanship as a reward for his years of underground service to the house of Wadeyar. Now, Arthur Wellesley had strong views on what he called 'dubashery', or sometimes simply 'Madras'—i.e. the corrupt rule through

¹ Qamar-ud-din's grandfather had been Killedar of Gurramkonda half a century before.

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Indian agents which he thought characterised that presidency. For some reason he regarded Tirumala Rao as dubashery in excelsis, and advised powerfully against him. Whereupon the veteran intriguer was given the pension of a *mir miran* (see below) and vanished to Madras, where he died in 1815.

As Dewan, Purnaiya drew a salary of 6,000 pagodas a year, plus one per cent commission on the revenue, which brought in another 19,000 pagodas or so. It was not until 1807, three years before his retirement and five before his death, that he was granted the jagir of Yelandur, south-east of Seringapatam, which his family continued to hold until all jagirs were abolished in the year 1956.

The Commission found that not a trace of military resistance had survived Tipu's death. In addition to Saiyid Saheb, Mir Sadik and the Binky Nabob, twenty-eight of his principal officers of or above the rank of Sipahdar or Mokumdar had been killed, including five of what the English called 'Meer Meerans' [*mir mirans*] or 'Principal Lords'. It was decided to pension off the more important of the surviving grandees, who were divided into three classes for the purpose. Four out of five in the first class, including our old companion Ghulam Ali and his fellow-vakil Ali Raza, were granted 3,000 pagodas a year for life and the fifth 2,400, while six in the second class (four of them *mir mirans*) got 500. In these classes the pensions were fixed not so much in relation to previous salaries but, in Beatson's words, 'by the policy of securing by a liberal provision, the attachment of so many persons of rank and influence to the interest and welfare of the British Government'. Beatson¹ adds that recipients heard the news 'with very lively sensations of gratitude and, in several cases, of wonder'. Fair enough, in circumstances where they might equally have expected to have their heads chopped off.

The pensions to thirteen officials in the third class are interesting because they were fixed at half what these men had been receiving before the crash. Since the pensions ranged from 280 to 420 pagodas, it can be deduced that Tipu paid his senior soldiers and civil servants between £500 and £700 per annum.

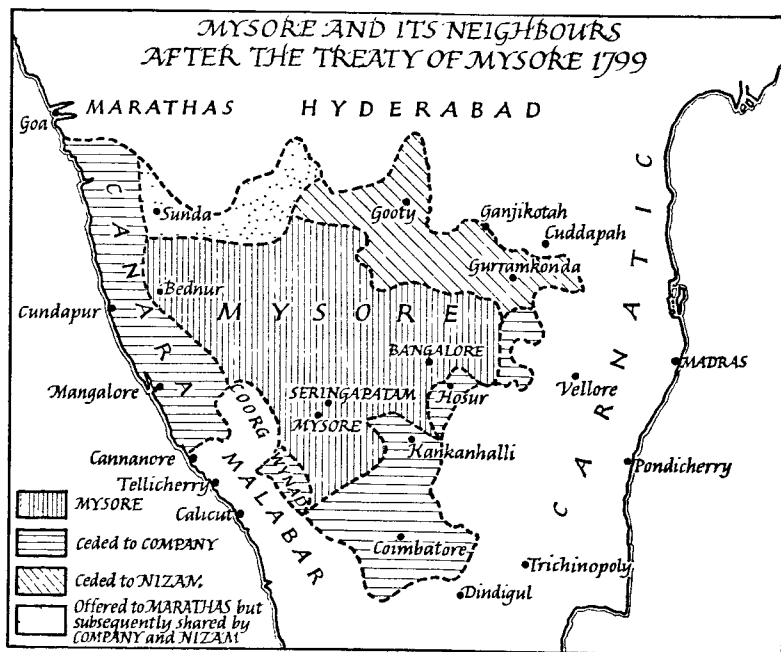
Further sums were provided for the dependants of various *mir mirans* killed in battle, including, one is glad to note, Saiyid Saheb. His tragedy had not ended in the Seringapatam citadel ditch. That same night, we learn from scattered references, his

¹ He sets out the pension arrangements very clearly (pp. 222-6).

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house was broken into, his womenfolk insulted and his fine library destroyed; later his very camels died neglected. Now, eighteen members of his family were allotted 200 pagodas a month for their maintenance. As may be imagined, claims upon the 'dependent relatives' portion of the pension fund flowed briskly and for a long time!

Meanwhile, the Commissioners were driving ahead with a draft Treaty between the Company and their Allies, to formalise their territorial gains. So far, the Nizam had got nothing out of Seringapatam except a lakh of pagodas from the prize fund, to be



MAP 5

divided between 6,000 of his cavalry. His troops had not even been invited to the looting! But it was now quickly and smoothly agreed that he should receive a slab of territory worth 600,000 pagodas, centred mainly on Gooty and Gurrumkonda. The English took what was left of Tipu's maritime lands below the Western Ghats; also the Wynad (after all!) and Coimbatore. They also insisted on occupying the heads of all the passes into Mysore from the east and south and, more importantly, the citadel and island of

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Seringapatam. After deducting the provision for Tipu's family from the Company's share, and Qamar-ud-din's jagir from the Nizam's, the extra revenue received by each power was identical.

But Wellesley had (or thought he had) another clever card to play. He wrote into the draft Treaty a clause whereby 'His Highness the Peshwa Rao Pundit Pradhan Bahadur', although he had not participated in either 'the expense or the danger of the late war', and so was not entitled to any share of the spoils, could claim 263,000 pagodas-worth of territory in the Bellary and Sunda districts, provided that he gave satisfaction to the Nizam and the Company on certain points, and to the latter alone on others. In short, Wellesley was trying to use the Treaty of Mysore (as it was called) as one more lever to force a Subsidiary Alliance on the Peshwa! But Nana Fadnavis, of course, saw the trap, and after long discussion, the offer was refused.

The Treaty was signed on June 22nd and was ratified by the Nizam on July 13th. Meanwhile a Subsidiary Treaty¹ had been worked out whereby the Company undertook the defence of the new régime in Mysore in exchange for a subsidy of seven lakhs of rupees. This Treaty was executed on July 8th as between the Company and 'Maharajah Mysore Kishna Raja Oodiaver Bahadoor', the signatories on behalf of the latter being Purnaiya and 'Luchumma, widow of the late Kishna Rajah'. 'Luchumma' was, of course, the famous Maharani Lakshmi Ammanni, protagonist of the Rana Treaty (p. 56) and life-long agitator with the English for the restoration of the Mysorean royal house. Lakshmi, in this moment of her triumph, had also signed, along with Dewaj Ammanni, the Raja's maternal aunt, a letter to the Commissioners (dated June 24th²) in which, the Company having favoured 'our boy' with the government of the country, they promised that while the sun and moon should endure they would regard themselves as under the protection and the orders of the English.

This opened the way to a formal visit by the Commissioners to the Raja in his 'stable'. They found the five-year-old child to be fair and of a very expressive countenance—timid at first but soon gaining in confidence. Arrangements were completed for the installation on June 30th. It was agreed that this should take

¹ Apart from Beatson (Appendices XLV and XLVII) the two Treaties are accessible in C. H. Rao (Vol. III, Appendix IV, 6 and 7).

² Beatson, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

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place at Mysore, and everyone was hard put to it to provide a decent setting, since the former capital had been deliberately reduced to ruins by Haidar and Tipu. However, with the help of the 'ancient musnud of the rajas' (Plate 23), which Beatson says was found in their Seringapatam palace, a dignified ceremonial was achieved. The members of the Commission jingled off to Mysore, accompanied by Mir Alam and an escort of cavalry and the 12th Foot. At the entrance of the temporary throne-room—according to Buchanan it was the 'least mean' of a group of labourers' huts on a building site—they received the Raja. With him came Purnaiya, various male relatives, and 'a vast concourse of Hindoos'. General Harris and Mir Alam then advanced, and taking the royal child by the hand, led him to the musnud, where he took his seat amid the rattle of musketry and the thunder of guns. We are not told whether that indefatigable sightseer Ghulam Ali, who was among a group of Moslem grandees 'spontaneously present',¹ joined in the applause.

Three days later the Commission was dissolved and the affairs of Mysore were handed over to the wise guidance of Purnaiya as Dewan and Barry Close as 'Resident at the Court of His Highness'. We can leave them to their task for the moment and return to Madras, where the Governor-General had been in a state of extreme effervescence ever since the fall of Seringapatam became known.

When Richard Wellesley arrived in India, he considered that he brought with him *carte blanche* from Pitt and Dundas for an expansionist policy. This, of course, was never put in writing and it is curious that Torrens's only reference to the confidential conversations which took place before the Governor-General-elect left England is in quite the opposite sense. Discussing the Wynad question, he says that Wellesley, 'remembering the oral injunctions of Dundas, given him at Walmer in the presence of Mr. Pitt', promised the restoration of the territory to Tipu 'notwithstanding his intense feeling of mistrust of the Sultan's attitude and purpose'.²

While, as we saw earlier, Dundas was inclined to weather-cock

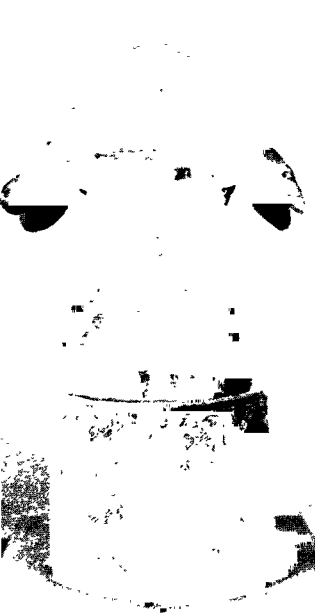
¹ The Commission to the Governor-General, June 30th.

² Torrens, *op. cit.*, p. 143.



17. "Tippoo's Tiger"

The model is 5 ft. 10 ins. long overall. *Victoria and Albert Museum*



18(a)



18(c)



18(b)

18(a) Quilted war cap and corselet from Tipu's armoury

Presented by Lord Wellesley to H.R.H. the Duke of York. Somewhat similar caps presented to the Prince Regent and the East India Company are at Windsor Castle and the Victoria and Albert Museum respectively; the cap at Audley End (see p. 356) is of the same type. *Tower of London Armouries*

18(b) Arab or Turkish *kazaghand*, i.e. shirt with mail lining (visible at neck)

Displayed against a length of fine fabric also from Seringapatam. Shirt on loan from the Baird family; fabric bequeathed by a descendant of Baird's A.D.C. Captain Young. *Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh*

18(c). Helmet from Tipu's armoury presented by the Baird family

Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh



19(a). Colonel Arthur Wellesley on campaign in India
Painted in 1804 by Robert Home and engraved (after
Wellesley had become Marquess Wellington) by Thomas
Williamson, *British Museum*



19(b). Marquess Wellesley
Painted by Robert Home in 1800, engraved by James Heath.
Wellesley is shown on the verandah of Government House,
Calcutta; British troops with one of Tipu's standards in the
background. *British Museum*



20(a)

20(a). Assaulting the breach

The central scene in the reduced version of Sir Robert Ker Porter's panorama 'The storming of Seringapatam'. The wounded figure resting on the gun is Lieut. Farquhar; on his right, Colonel Dunlop engages a 'sirdar' in mortal combat; above, Sergeant Graham, in the last moment of his life, plants the British flag; in the centre Major-General Baird animates his troops. *The Earl of Stair*

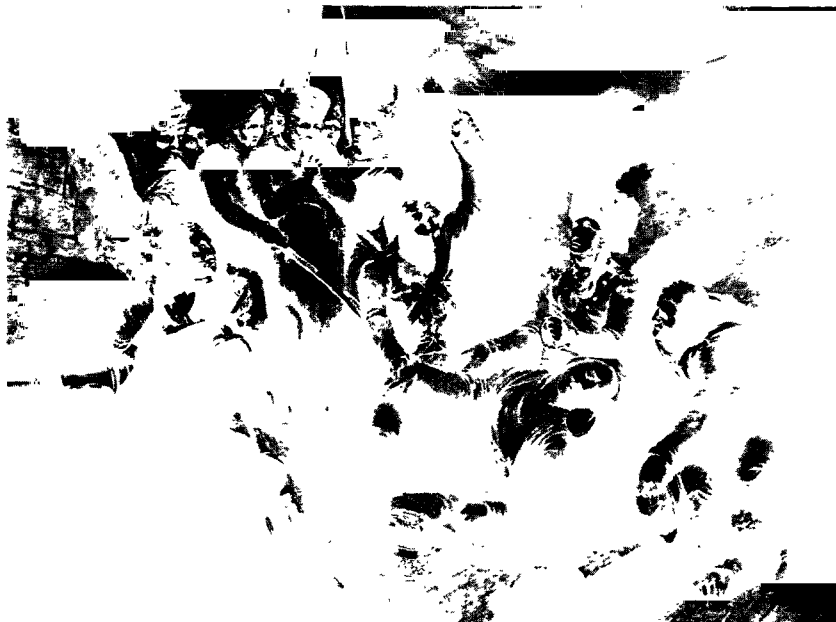


20(b)

20(b). Quiet aftermath

The north-west corner of the Seringapatam ramparts, as they looked 100 years after the storm. The breach is on the right. *India Office Library*





21(a). 'The Finding of the Body of Tipoo Sultan'

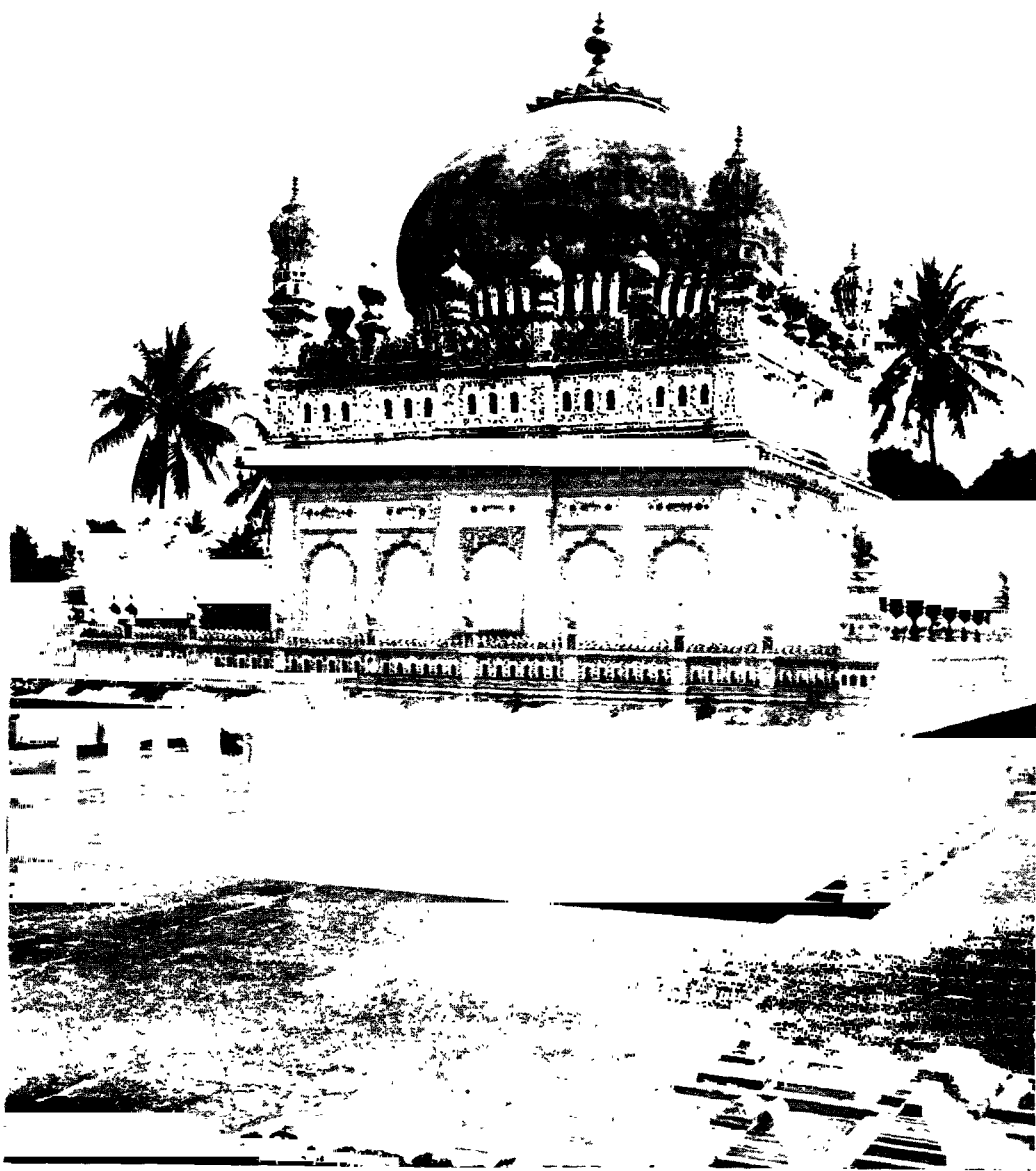
Engraved by S. W. Reynolds after Sir Robert Ker Porter. Perhaps the most dramatic of all versions of the scene. The artist believed that the English were led to the spot by Tipu's servant, Taza Khan (standing left). Whereabouts of original unknown.

National Army Museum



21(b). 'The Surrender of the Children of Tipu Sultan',
by Thomas Stothard, R.A.

This picture of the younger princes leaving the Zenana shows influences from the old 'Hostages' theme of seven years earlier. The central figure, intended for General Baird, it is only an approximate likeness



22. Mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. Seringapatam
Built by Tipu, 1784. *Ani Chand, Secunderabad*



23. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III of Mysore, on the ancient ivory throne
to which the conquerors of Tipu restored him

This drawing appears in an album, incorporating the *Journal of a Voyage to the East Indies in 1798-1801*, by Charlotte Florentia, daughter of the 2nd Lord Clive, and later Duchess of Northumberland. She was only 11 years of age when she began her Journal, and the drawing was the work of her governess, Signorina Tonelli (August 13th, 1800). *Mrs. P. H. Rosselli*

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as the winds of victory or danger blew, it seems improbable that he would have so far disowned Pitt's India Act as to promise any countenance to aggressive war. What is more likely is that he told Wellesley that almost anything would be justified which could be construed as frustrating the designs of France. Wellesley recognised this as the perfect card to play against Tipu, and Dundas himself, when news of the Malartic Proclamation reached him from the Cape, used language which comes near to inciting his proconsul in India to invade Mysore. Tipu, he says (writing to Wellesley on June 16th, 1798), will clearly have to disown the Proclamation, and he goes on:

If he contents himself with a mere denial and is at the same time, by preparations and hostile movements demonstrating his breach of treaty with this country, your Lordship's wisdom and vigilance will not be trifled with but will, when you think it the proper moment for doing so, bring him to an explanation in the only way such conduct merits, and . . . so to act with regard to other allies as to induce them to cooperate with us in chastising so notorious a breach of faith.

Two days later a letter from the Secret Committee to the Governor-General-in-Council (Dundas to Wellesley, in practice) lays down the same line, but this time there is a proviso, in case of trouble with public opinion later: if it does come to war, we must not fail

to make known to the powers in alliance with us the necessity of such a measure, and that we have not in view a wanton attack on our inveterate enemy with a design to augment our own power, but a necessary and justifiable defence of our own possessions.

By December 29th, the Battle of the Nile having eased the tensions in his own mind, Dundas assumes that French assistance is unlikely to reach India, and finally, on March 18th, 1799, ignorant of course that Harris's army is already on the road to Malvalli, he reflects that while it was very natural that Wellesley should have proposed instant war on Tipu in the first place, he was right 'not to bring it to that extremity'.

To the small but volcanic Governor-General, this tight-rope act meant nothing. With his extraordinary powers of auto-intoxication, he had convinced himself that his countrymen were looking to him to extirpate Tipu—and to go on from there. Six months

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after the fall of Seringapatam we find him writing to Dundas (apropos of Hyderabad affairs):

If you will have a little patience, the death of the Nizam will probably enable me to gratify your *voracious appetite for lands and fortresses*. Seringapatam ought, I think, to stay your stomach awhile; not to mention Tanjore and the Poligar countries. Perhaps I may be able to give you a supper of Oudh and the Carnatic, if you should still be hungry.

This is ugly, and even Wellesley's justified pride in the outcome of the Fourth Mysore War somehow turns repellent. Never were there such pompous Orders of the Day, never such vainglorious replies to congratulatory addresses, never such vaunting despatches home. The very preamble to the Treaty of Mysore pants with triumph and self-justification. Wellesley, one is sure, had come really and truly to believe that 'the deceased Tippoo Sultan . . . entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the French and admitted a French force into his army for the purpose of commencing war against the Honourable English Company Bahadoor and its allies'; that the latter proceeded to hostilities 'for the preservation of their respective Dominions from the perils of foreign invasion and from the ravages of a cruel and relentless enemy'; and that it had been Almighty God who had crowned a just cause with 'a continued course of victory and success . . . the reduction of the capital of Mysore, the fall of Tippoo Sultan, the utter extinction of his power, and the unconditioned submission of his people'.

The King's Birthday, June 4th, was chosen as the day when this sense of glory was to be given a public airing in Madras. On the 2nd, Lieutenant Harris, son of the Commander-in-Chief, had arrived from Seringapatam with Tipu Sultan's standard, while Majors Allan and Beatson¹ bore the flags of Chapuis's detachment. After a service of thanksgiving at St. Martin's Church, troops and officials assembled in the square. Young Harris, escorted by Grenadiers, brought the captured Colours to the spot where the Governor-General awaited them:

The moment of arrival [reported the *Calcutta Gazette*] was the most awful we have ever witnessed. The Governor-General,

¹ According to a note in the *Flag Book* of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea (see p. 357, n.).

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advancing a few steps with a dignity not easily to be described, laid his hand upon the Standard of the once haughty and perfidious Mysorean, and by a firm and instant pressure, bent it towards the earth.

Followed an embrace for Lieutenant Harris and an allocution during which, as the words 'invincible gallantry' and 'immortal glory' soared predictably into the brilliant sky, the *Madras Courier* had leisure to observe that the standard of Mysore possessed neither splendour of device nor elegance of texture. It was 'simply a flag of coarse red cotton cloth, ornamented with a white, radiated sun in the centre'. Tipu's second-best banner, perhaps.

But these were mere provincial celebrations. 'Through the clouds of incense and flattery', says Torrens, 'Morington's heart yearned towards home.' It was agony to him to realise that his letters announcing the fall of Seringapatam could not possibly reach Pitt and Dundas and the Court of Directors before September. He longed for their praise and for his reward—nay he shouted for the latter with self-defeating stridency. 'If,' he wrote to Lord Grenville, 'my success at Hyderabad and Seringapatam, accomplished within six months, be not merit, I know not what the public service is'¹—the Garter would be much more acceptable than any additional title, nor would such title be an object unless it raised him to the same rank as Lord Cornwallis.

The rest of 1799 wore away while the Governor-General nursed his impatience. At last in about April 1800, congratulatory letters began to trickle in, followed by—an Irish Marquessate! Every writer on Wellesley has commented amazedly upon the sequel. Yet one feels that, having the examples of Clive and Macartney before them, the authorities should have realised what a sensitive area this of Irish honours was—and with what a super-sensitive spirit they had to deal. Of course, Wellesley had over-played his hand, and he is also said to have annoyed George III by his semi-regal style and entourage. But a point might have been stretched and something handsomer offered than the 'pinchbeck' title, the 'double-gilt Potato', which Wellesley now alleged had humiliated him in the sight of all India!

As it was, the outraged Governor-General, in Roberts's words,

¹ Historical MSS. Commission, Dropmore Papers (*Fortescue*), Vol. V, p. 49.

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‘abandoned every shred of dignity and self-control’. Nor was it a mere hasty spurt of indignation; nothing he had written in the meanwhile exceeded the megalomaniac bitterness of a letter, dated October 2nd, 1800, to Lady Anne Barnard at the Cape:

On what honours you compliment me I know not . . . Perhaps you refer to the votes of Parliament and the conscious sense of eminent public service—these are honours indeed which neither negligence nor ingratitude, nor ignorance, nor folly, nor envy can impair . . . This brief declamation will . . . give you some light to discover the causes of my ill-health and of my declining, indignant, wounded spirits.

But do not suppose me so weak as to meditate hasty resignations or passionate returns to Europe, or fury, or violence, of any kind. No—I will shame their injustice by aggravating the burthen of their obligations to me; I will heap kingdoms on kingdoms, victory upon victory, revenue upon revenue; I will accumulate glory, and wealth, and power, until the ambition and avarice even of my masters shall cry mercy; and then I will show them what dust in the balance their tardy gratitude is, in the estimate of injured, neglected, disdainful merit.¹

History shows that the accumulation of glory and wealth and power was not the least what his masters (or *their* masters, the Commons of England) wanted of Wellesley and that it would lead him close to the fate of Warren Hastings. Meanwhile he climbed slowly out of his abyss of mental, and as he believed, physical prostration, though the incredible volume of work which he got through during the months preceding his letter to Lady Anne suggest that this was in part unconscious play-acting. It should be added, in justice to this strange man, that he took nothing for himself from the plunder of Seringapatam, insisting that even a star of St. Patrick which the officers had caused to be made for him from some of Tipu’s jewels must first be offered to the Company, nor would he accept a grant of £100,000 out of the Prize Fund, which he felt he would be receiving at the expense of the troops. Eventually the Company voted him a pension of £5,000 per annum for twenty years.

Wellesley’s hysteria over his title was no help to his subordinates. Harris was offered the inevitable Irish peerage but refused

¹ *Lives of the Lindsays*, Vol. III, p. 404.

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it, and it was not until 1815 that he received his United Kingdom barony 'of Seringapatam and Mysore', still held by his descendants; Baird was made a baronet only in 1809 and Floyd in 1816.

Peerages and pagodas . . . perhaps we are making too much of them in this story of 'the Raj's return'. They certainly did not come the way of the more or less obscure officials left behind to run Tipu's shattered kingdom. Though most of them were soldiers, an irresistible impression forms as one browses through their letters and reports—that we are here at the birth of nothing less than the Indian Civil Service, sober, pragmatic and, with a few spectacular exceptions, incorrupt. The fact that so many of the Company servants we have met hitherto were of a different stamp gives a special aura to these men, as they go about their incredibly miscellaneous duties by day, and at night roost as best they can in malarial and semi-ruinous Seringapatam.

Vert on a chevron embattled erminois, between three hedgehogs or, as many bombs sable, fired proper; on a chief of augmentation a representation of the gates of the fortress of Seringapatam, the drawbridge let down and the Union Flag of Great Britain and Ireland hoisted above the standard of Tippoo Sahib, all proper.

Crest. On a mural crown a royal tiger passant gardant vert, striped or and spotted of the first, pierced in the breast with an arrow of the last, vulned gules, and charged on the forehead with the Persian character implying 'Hyder' and crowned with an eastern coronet, both of the first.

Supporters: dexter, a grenadier in the uniform of the 73rd Foot, supporting in the exterior hand the Union Flag of Great Britain and Ireland, flying towards the dexter over the standard of Tippoo Sahib, and below the same the tricoloured flag of the French, represented depressed and furled, all proper; sinister, a Sepoy of the Madras Establishment of the East India Company, supporting in the exterior hand the Flag of the same Company, flying towards the sinister over the standard of Tippoo Sahib, and below the same the tricolour flag of the French as in the dexter.

Fig. 1. The Harris Coat of Arms. A good example of 19th century 'topical' heraldry. *From Debrett's Peerage.*



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Arthur Wellesley might be lodged in style in the Daria Daulat pavilion and Barry Close have a house built for him (though the work went on but slowly); these were the lucky ones. The only surprise is that one or two of the officers seem to have contrived to bring their wives along to share their hardships. At any rate, it is a tradition in the family of Captain Norris, Chief Engineer, that his daughter was 'born in the Nabob's kitchen', and to this day baby girls among his descendants receive the pretty name of 'Seringa'.¹

¹ Private information.

The Legend Remains

IN the earlier chapters of this book we watched Tipu Sultan's ascent from the plateau established by his father to a summit of world significance. Strong internal government, propaganda abroad on an impressive scale, an utter refusal to compromise with his enemies—such were the means whereby the ruler of a not very large or populous South Indian State imposed the idea of his importance upon two continents.

Yet his death did not cause a corresponding stir. This is undoubtedly because both his opponents and his allies had a more realistic idea than Lord Wellesley of Tipu's capacity to influence events in the context of 1799. By that date, the truncated Mysore of the post-Cornwallis era was in fact showing signs of reversion to a purely local role. A Napoleonic invasion of India, or the hardly less grandiose French help for which Tipu continued obsessively to plead, would have changed everything, but short of that he had neither the will nor the means seriously to challenge a power such as England. 'If we are to have a war at all, it must be one of our own making', as Arthur Wellesley noted, with implacable commonsense, in his draft reply to the Governor-General's memorandum on the Malartic proclamation.

Thanks to developments both in Europe and India, the fall of Seringapatam tended to be seen as a thrilling feat of arms rather than a great political event. The news of it had hardly reached the West before Napoleon's return to France from Egypt (October 8th, 1799), followed by his November *coup d'état*, marked the end for the time being of his Asiatic ambitions. In India, Wellesley continued without pause that programme of wars, annexations and subsidiary alliances which, as he dreamed, was to shame his employers into recognising and rewarding his greatness and his glory. Moreover the very completeness of Tipu's fall and the stability of the successor régime removed Mysore, so to speak, from the British agenda, and even the most inveterate enemies of 'imperialism' at Westminster had to join, however tepidly, in the applause.

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But, as hinted in my Prologue, there was nothing half-hearted in the impact of the events of May 4th, 1799 on the man in the London street. Henceforward his mind was stamped with the image of Tippoo Sahib, the ferocious Tiger of Mysore, whose glossy hide had now been added to Britain's trophies. The artists and print-makers (as alert to topicality as the television producers today) are our best witnesses. As the incident of the hostages was exploited in 1791, so now 'The Storming of Seringapatam', 'Tippoo Sultan's Last Stand', 'Sir David Baird discovering the Body of Tipu', 'Tippoo's Body identified by his Servants', and variants on all these were rushed onto canvas and thence to the copper plate.

Appendix IV gives some idea of the range, and I would only comment here that while the artistic standard of 1799 shows some decline from seven years earlier, the former can at least claim the *largest*, if not the most inspired, Tipu picture ever painted. Mather Brown (p. 186) was easily outdone by Robert (later Sir Robert) Ker Porter, whose 'The Storming of Seringapatam' was 120 ft. long and covered altogether 2,550 square feet of canvas. However, this can be classified as more in the nature of scene painting than of a permanent work of art. Porter at that time specialised in 'panoramas'. Though they did not move, these were a curious anticipation in some ways of 'cinerama', since they were shown on a curved screen and were divided into three parts, which could be adapted for a set of prints in due course (Plate 20a).

Several London halls were used for such shows. Porter's 'Seringapatam', which he is said to have painted in six weeks, was mounted at the Lyceum in the Strand (Admission 1/-, 9 a.m. till dusk), and was followed by similarly expansive works from the same brush, e.g. 'The Battle of Alexandria' and 'The Defeat of the French and the Passage of the St. Gothard by General Suwarrow'. Promotional literature was on a lavish scale—it included a remarkably detailed key to the panorama and an additional key to the engravings, while that quite ambitious compilation *Narrative Sketches of the Conquest of Mysore*, whose title at least is familiar to students of Harris's campaign, is nothing more than an educative 'puff' for the Lyceum enterprise.

From scene painting to actual scenery. Well down the cultural scale, but testifying to the glamour exercised by Tipu over the

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popular mind during and for many years after his stormy reign, were the London stage spectacles he inspired. Allardyce Nicoll, in his *History of English Drama*, records four productions, but we know of at least two more, and an 1829 playbill notes how often Tipu's story had been presented 'in various theatres and at different times'. We shall probably never establish the full score. It is striking that the earliest of Nicoll's quartet, *Tippoo Saib, or British Valour in India*, had been put on at Covent Garden on June 1st 1791, when only the sketchiest news of the opening of the Third Mysore War can have filtered through. One would like to know whether any particular event was pictured in this 'Story told in action'. However, as a playbill for the second performance (June 7th), preserved in the Enthoven Collection,¹ describes it as 'partly new and partly selected from the much admired pantomimes, *The Rival Knights*, *Provocation* etc.', its intentions can hardly have been very serious. Mr. Follett played Tippoo Saib, Mr. Byrne an English Colonel, Miss Francis the Colonel's lady and Mr. Bannister obliged with 'a favourite Indian war song'.

Less than a year later *Tippoo Saib* was followed by *Tippoo Sultan, or The Siege of Bangalore* (Astley's April 9th, 1792), so it is obvious that Tipu was a 'draw' long before the name of Seringapatam began to ring round the world. The show at Astley's (part-theatre, part-arena) was much the same sort of 'Whimsical, Tragical, Comical, Pantomimical Sketch' as at Covent Garden, though on a more spectacular scale. A critique in an (un-named) English paper, which by a happy chance was reprinted in the *Madras Courier* for December 13th, 1792, certainly relates to this production, and it would be a crime not to quote it almost in full:

Had Astley resided all his life in Mysore and its neighbouring countries (says the writer), he could not be better informed than he is respecting the manners, customs etc., of Tippoo Saib, his court and subjects.

Tippoo in the first act, is discovered seated at a table, surrounded by his nobility dressed in the Turkish manner, but instead of turbans they all appear in *Armenian caps* enriched with plumes of feathers. His guards, who are seen at a distance, are

¹ I am grateful to Mr. A. S. Latham for his zeal in digging Tipuiana out of that great mine.

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clothed in 'Tygers' skins and armed with halberds, resembling very much the Beef Eaters in the Tower.

In the second Act the manners and customs of the people are introduced. The High Priest of the Sun, who comes forward attended by numbers of priests of various orders, having made his invocation, he retires to commence the sacrifices of the day, the victims for which are seen bound, with wreaths of flowers round their necks, and consist of Hares, Rams and Hogs.

In the back part of the stage there are a number of people *wrestling* and others running races, a party of *beautiful virgins* urging them to victory and to the prize. Others are dancing, leaping, *skating* etc. etc.

The Second Act scenery, it appears, was particularly fine. 'Tippoo's palace in the cypress garden', in front of which the dancers and skaters glided about, was in 'the first style of *Grecian architecture*, with this *happy difference* that the *chimneys* rise in the form of *minarets* . . . and give a magnificent effect to the whole'. Then comes the parting shot: 'Thus may our Asiatic readers get an impression of their customs and habits, as held up to their view by the enlightened geniuses of Europe.'

With any Asiatic critics at a safe distance, Astley was encouraged by local enthusiasm for *The Siege of Bangalore* to take advantage of the next big news from India. By August 20th, 1792, he had heard enough about the story of the hostages to send post-haste to Paris (why *Paris*?) for a drawing of Seringapatam and to stage *Tippoo Saib's Two Sons*, with their Affecting, Pleasing and Interesting Departure from their Father and their Noble Reception by the Commander-in-Chief. A stage 'natural' if ever there was one!

The succeeding wave of Tipu spectacles is equally predictable. In the year 1799 the fall of Seringapatam was celebrated immediately by a production at Sadler's Wells, not recorded by Nicoll, but criticised on grounds of accuracy in Lushington's biography of Lord Harris. There is then a gap in our information, though further research would no doubt reveal a continuous vogue. On the other hand we know quite a lot about *Tippoo Saib, or The Storming of Seringapatam*, produced at the Royal Coburg on January 20th, 1823. This time there seems to have been some attempt at setting an authentic scene. That excellent stage

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designer Stanfield pictured 'The Heights of Malavelli', 'The Sultan's Splendid Pavilion' and so on, but the dramatic side was less austere, as may be judged by the presence in the cast of 'Soaker (a Sergeant of Infantry)', 'Theophilus Toddle (a newly-arrived Recruit)', and other unhistorical characters.

The author was J. H. Amherst and the sort of job he made of it can still be gauged by the heavily cut version issued by the firm of Hodgson for use with their toy theatres. This 'juvenile drama' offers a weird *mélange* of Seringapatam 1792 and 1799, since in the first part Tipu sends his myrmidons Ahmed Ali Kawn and Alef Achbar to rescue his hostage children (*'May they not, ere this, have become the victims of tyranny and shed their innocent blood to gratify the vengeance of the oppressive English?'*), while the second half of course leads up to his death in battle. Songs of great insipid yitare interspersed, and for comic relief we have a duet of the Sergeant (not called Soaker for the juveniles) and Theophilus Toddle:

SERG. Give me the bustle of the battle
Where the roaring cannons rattle!
THOE. Give me a place free from its trials
My mother's shop in Seven Dials!
etc.

The whole series reached its climax with *The Storming of Seringapatam, or The Death of Tippoo Saib*, the 1829 Easter Monday attraction at Astley's. This time the entire rag-bag of pseudo-Orientalism and pseudo-history was emptied onto the stage and overflowed into the arena. The 37 New Scenes embraced (amid how much else!), The Splendid Encampment of Hyder Ali Bawn, The Royal ZENANA, A Cruel Murder and Outrage by Tippoo, The Ganges (!) by Moonlight, an Army of ZEMINDARS, That Detestable and Notoriously Cruel Prison THE BLACK HOLE, The Well-known Tableau of the Sons of Tippoo Delivered up as Hostages, Colonel Wellesley's address to his Troops, and of course The Celebrated Struggle of the Sultan amidst Hundreds of Assailants, and his spectacular Death. The correspondent of the *Theatrical Journal* for May thought it was the most splendid military spectacle he had witnessed for years, though he was a little cooler about the acting: Mr. Cartlitch as Tipu, 'looked very fierce and roared as loud as any of the tigers of that royal sultan



Fig. 3. Henry Kemble in the 1823 production of *Tippoo Saib*
—*Victoria and Albert Museum*

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ever did', but Mr. Gomeral, as Colonel Wellesley, resembled less the Hero of Waterloo than the Warrior of France.

As we know from *Sketches by Boz*, Astley's was a prime favourite for family outings in Regency London and much later, so Tipu Sultan must have become firmly embedded in the nursery folklore of the nineteenth century.

In literature, the reaction to Tipu's death did not rise much above the level of patriotic jingles in the Indian and British Press, though C. H. Rao¹ is able to quote at least two minor poets who had the grace to lament the once potent ruler's fall. Dr. John Leyden, Surgeon to the Mysore Survey, wrote a *Dirge on Tippoo Sultan*, based apparently upon local popular songs and including references to some of Tipu's supporters (or betrayers):

Pournia sprung from Brahma's line
Intrepid in the martial fray
Alike in council formed to shine—
How could our Sultan's power decay?

In 1823 Bernard Wycliffe published *The Mussulman's Lament over the Body of Tipu Sultan, Written on the Spot where he Fell*. This has quite a stirring refrain:

Allah! it is better to die
With war clouds hanging ready o'er us,
Than to live a life of infamy,
With years of grief and shame before us!

In prose, the main output was of those copious 'narratives' of serving officers or of Tipu's prisoners, from which I have so often quoted, and which clearly met a popular demand. And when at last a full-length novel on a Tipu theme appeared, long stretches of it were hardly distinguishable from them. Colonel Meadows Taylor's *Tippoo Sultaun* (1839) could indeed be described as 'fictionalised Wilks', since it follows the Authorised Version of the events of 1782–99 with slightly comic fidelity.² One way or another, its two heroes, Indian and English, manage to insert themselves into every historic scene—and not infrequently to hog it. Kasim

¹ *Op. cit.* Vol. III, pp. 1000–1.

² Even less disguised are the Wilksian dissertations in a boys' book by the prolific G. A. Henty, published by Blackie and Co., London, in 1885. I must at least give a brotherly salute to its title—*The Tiger of Mysore!*

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Ali, handsome young headman of a village near Adoni, having rescued the still more beautiful girl bride of one of Tipu's warriors, Abdool Rhyman Khan, from being drowned in a flooded river, is invited to travel on with their party to Seringapatam. A dangerous offer, since the Khan is rather more than middle-aged, and has not yet owned up to his lovely Ameenah that he already has two mature and strong-minded wives in the Mysorean capital. However, that side of things burns with a very slow match while Kasim joins Tipu's bodyguard (the year is 1788), is sent on the marriage mission to the Nizam, marches against the Nairs, witnesses that elephant-slicing episode, acts as guide in the attack on the Travancore Lines, heaves Tipu out of the ditch, and no doubt would have taken charge against Cornwallis had he not been severely wounded and thrown back temporarily into the intrigues of the zenana.

It was some years earlier that his English opposite number, Herbert Compton, left his father's honeysuckle-shrouded rectory of Alston (good rich living, grandfather a baronet, and so on) to join the Company's army. *His* first service is under Mathews, 'a man of deep religious feeling', to whom he becomes almost a confidant. He even travels as a sort of invisible third when Macleod and Humberstone blast off to Bombay. However, he is back in time for the fall of Bednur, is taken prisoner, and sees Mathews murdered. The rest of Herbert's story could be a distillation of *Captives of Tipu* rather than of Wilks, since he spends the next ten years or so in Nandidrug and other insalubrious dungeons.

How the two threads are brought together, and by what sleight-of-hand Kasim is manœuvred by his author into the English ranks, so that he who had led Tipu Sultan to the Travancore Lines now reveals the Sosile ford to General Harris, would take too long to tell, but it would be a pity to skip the climax. Tipu looks down from the walls of Seringapatam:

The Sultaun's heart sank within him; he could not be mistaken in those features—it was Baird, whom he had so often reviled. 'He comes to revenge the old man', he muttered, 'to revenge Mathews!'

It was a noble sight to see that one man stand thus alone in front of the armies; he appeared to look at the Fort for an instant,

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then drew his sword from its scabbard, and as it came forth it flashed in the sunlight. He waved it high in the air. Another leapt to his side; he was a native; he wore a steel cap and glittering chain-armour; a shield hung on his arm and he waved a broad sabre.

Kasim, of course.

A yarn for the gullible, perhaps, yet by no means a bad introduction to Tipu's Mysore. In spite of the clumsiness of his action, and much Jacobethan dialogue in the second person singular, Taylor¹ brings the despot to life in all his moodiness and erratic energy, and has a great feeling for the splendour of the Ghats and of the armies which move up and down them to battle.

Tippoo Sultaun, in fact, comes nearer to the real world of eighteenth-century India than does another work of fiction to which a far greater name than Meadows Taylor's is attached. I doubt whether Walter Scott's short novel, *The Surgeon's Daughter*, has many readers today. Swathed in an extraordinary apparatus of introductions and prologues and grossly overweighted with plot, it occupies an uneasy niche in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, First Series (1827). It purports to deal with an earlier period than *Tippoo Sultaun*—the 1760s in fact—and Tipu appears as a lecherous young monster from whose clutches an innocent Scots girl is only saved by Haider Ali, *deus ex machina* in a spectacular way!

The interesting thing about this queer tale is that most of Scott's apparently far-fetched episodes do have some remote historical basis. The way in which the Highland doctor's pupil, believing that he is going to get an East India Company cadetship, is 'crimped' and drugged and wakes up in a sort of lunatic asylum in the Isle of Wight, has a genuine connection with the early methods of obtaining recruits and with the use of the Island as a depot. Then, once in India, and having with the greatest casualness killed his colonel in a duel, he takes service with an improbable-sounding character called 'the Begum Montreville', widow of a Swiss officer and now in command of a fort in the Haider Ali country! Yet the Begum derives almost certainly from de la

¹ Philip Meadows Taylor (1808-76) had an interesting career in South India, mainly as a soldier and political officer under the Nizam. *Tippoo Sultaun* was his second novel; his first, *Confessions of a Thug*, made him temporarily famous. Henry Bruce's 1920 edition of Taylor's *The Story of My Life* (Oxford) is excellent reading.

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Tour's description of a certain Madame Mequinez, to whom Haidar gave the colonelcy of her late husband's regiment. Edward Moor, too, in the *Narrative of Captain Little's Detachment* has entertaining stories about the 'lady colonels' of the time. One of them was the widow of the mysterious 'Mr. Yvon', once Quarter-master-Sergeant Evans of Vellore, but later in the service of the Peshwa and a spy of the English. After his brave death at the siege of Dharwar, Mrs. Yvon inherited his battalion. She gave the acting command to another Englishman called Robinson and when he offended her she sacked him and put him in gaol.¹

When Scott does try for sober verisimilitude he is apt to go astray—e.g. in introducing the 'real life' figure of the notorious Brahmin Papaiya, 'dubash to the English Governor'. But Papaiya's service was actually with John Hollond, acting-Governor of Madras some twenty years later. Scott himself noted the anachronism when the story was already in print. Like Meadows Taylor, he is much taken by the grandeur and glitter of the Mysorean court; some of his descriptions read as though they had been copied verbatim from a manuscript source or dictated by Scott's friend, Colonel James Ferguson, whose help he acknowledges. It is a pity that our only 'Tipu' novel by a major writer should be such a minor work, but it is worth a ramble through, not only because of the beguiling extravagances of the plot, but because of its clues to the state of the 'Tippoo the Tiger' legend some twenty-five years after the fall of Seringapatam.

As with a great novelist, so alas with a great poet—and I do not refer to Sir Henry Newbolt. Like many other devotees of Keats, I have always shied off *The Cap and Bells*, his rather uninspired satire on the Prince Regent. Yet this is Tipu country! In *Tippoo's Tiger* Mrs. Archer recalls how, about 1819, the young Keats, already in declining health, visited Leadenhall Street to enquire about a possible post as ship's surgeon with the Company. While waiting for his interview, his eye must have been caught by the exhibit which was the pride of East India House—the Tiger.

¹ I was amused, while studying the 'female colonels', to come across a letter from Cornwallis to the Rev. B. Grisdale ('Camp near Bangalore, Sept. 8th, 1791'). Though his new living of Withington was actually in the gift of the Bishop of Gloucester, Mr. Grisdale received it from Cornwallis's aunt, being 'one of the options of which, as the widow of the Archbishop of Canterbury, she had the disposal'.

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And so, in due course, *The Cap and Bells* is graced by the Emperor Elfinan and his sinister toy, the 'Man-Tiger-Organ'. The 'little buzzing noise' which the creature emits and which is mistaken for 'a soft imperial snore', suggests that though the poet may have seen the original he never heard its discordant growls; but the playing of the 'Man-Tiger-Organ' as a symptom of the Emperor's 'moody bitterness' is well on target.¹

No masterpieces, then, inspired by the story of Tipu Sultan. Yet his last day on earth and the fearful night that followed did eventually furnish a reverberant prologue to one. 'The first, the longest and the best of modern English detective stories' is how T. S. Eliot² describes *The Moonstone*, and in it Wilkie Collins certainly runs neck-and-neck with his friend Charles Dickens, who first serialised the tale in *All the Year Round* (1868). What a brilliant stroke, that the sacred jewel of the title, after passing through many an Indian hand, should reach England at last as part of the plunder of Seringapatam!

Collins flings us into the narrative, headfirst. The great diamond, mounted by Tipu in the handle of a dagger, is guarded night and day in his Treasury; the English troops before the city know its legend; one young officer, John Herncastle, is determined that it shall next glitter on his own finger. After the storm, described in a single taut paragraph, he and his cousin (the narrator) are rashly selected by General Baird to try to stop the looting:

There was riot and confusion enough in the Treasury, but no violence that I saw. The men (if I may use such an expression) disgraced themselves goodhumouredly. All sorts of rough jests and catchwords were bandied about among them; and the story of the Diamond turned up again unexpectedly, in the form of a mischievous joke. 'Who's got the Moonstone?' was the rallying cry which perpetually caused the plundering, as soon as it was stopped in one place, to break out in another.

The cousins had become separated, and from the other side of the courtyard is heard a fearful yelling. The narrator hurries to

¹ Mrs. Archer refers to an article by Phyllis Mann in the *Keats-Shelley Journal*, VI (1957), for a possible link between Tipu and the Prince Regent in Keats's mind.

² In his Introduction to the World's Classics edition (Oxford, 1928).

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the scene. Two Indians are lying dead across a doorway, a third mortally wounded, is sinking at the feet of a man whose back is momentarily turned—John Herculastle, with a torch in one hand and a dagger dripping with blood in the other!

A stone set like a pommel in the end of the dagger's handle flashed in the torchlight as he turned to me, like a gleam of fire. The dying Indian sank to his knees, pointed to the dagger in Herculastle's hand and said in his native language—'*The Moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!*'

It is time to return to the only slightly less melodramatic India of the history books. Although, as suggested earlier in this chapter, the decisive victory of 1799 swept Mysore from the centre of the political (if not of Astley's) arena, certain episodes followed without which the story of Tipu Sultan and his house would not be complete.

Wellesley, like Cornwallis after 1792, certainly turned his mind elsewhere; he was content to make sure that the conquered State was provided with the best administrators available,¹ and to sustain them with periodical draughts of praise. However, his concept of Tipu Sultan as Grand Conspirator served him one more useful turn when Tipu himself had been over a year in the grave.

In fact it opened the road to a take-over of power in the Carnatic. In 1795 Muhammad Ali, that seemingly imperishable Nawab, had died at last. His successor was his son, Omdut-ul-Omra, who had never been regarded as a particularly good friend of the English Raj—Eyre Coote had suspicions about him as far

¹ Barry Close remained Resident in Mysore until the autumn of 1801. Wellesley would have liked John Malcolm to succeed him, but the appointment was given to Josiah Webbe as a means of retaining his services after the Court of Directors had decided to confer his Secretaryship to the Madras Council upon a nominee of their own. It does not seem that Webbe ever proceeded to Mysore. Malcolm held the post from February 1803 until the end of 1807, but he was constantly busy elsewhere and the work was ably carried out by his deputy, the historian Mark Wilks. Meanwhile, Arthur Wellesley, as O.C. Troops, also had his headquarters at Seringapatam, though much of the time, like Malcolm, he was exercising high command and emerging into fame on other fields.

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back as 1780. Long before that it had become clear that the system of dual control as between the Nawab and the Company, which survived only in the Madras Presidency and had, among other things, made possible the appalling imbroglio of the Nawab's debts, was obsolete and injurious to the last degree, and successive Governors of Madras—and indeed Governors-General—had ached to get rid of it.

Wellesley found the pretext. In April 1800 he forwarded to Lord Clive certain extracts from the mass of papers unearthed in the Palace at Seringapatam. These, in his sanguine view, provided sovereign proof that both Muhammad Ali, that lifelong partner of the English, and Omdut-ul-Omra had conducted a treacherous intrigue with Tipu Sultan. When and how? Almost entirely through Ghulam Ali and Ali Raza, when they were acting as bear-leaders to the young hostages and escorting them on those complimentary visits to the Nawab in 1793!

That there was an interchange of lavish courtesies; that Tipu and Muhammad Ali professed identical views on the duty of making Holy War upon all infidels; that the former received some trivial items of political and military gossip from the latter; and that some of their exchanges were protected from public gaze by the use of a cypher—all these things can fairly be read into the reports which the vakils sent to their master. Tipu in fact was up to his eternal game of seeking alliance with any and every accessible prince of the earth—even with Muhammad Ali! But Wellesley's firmest admirers have been forced to admit that in spite of his confident trumpetings, the documents were quite inadequate to sustain a charge of treason, or to give grounds for forcing upon Omdut-ul-Omra a treaty to deprive him of all executive power.¹ It is after appearing before the Commissioners

¹ Unfortunately Omdut-ul-Omra died in July 1801. His 'guilt' was immediately transferred to his son, Ali Hussein, a mere child, to whom an ultimatum for the surrender of everything but the nominal sovereignty of the Carnatic was presented on the very day of his father's death. After some wavering by himself and the two Regents acting for him, the terms were refused. Ali Hussein was then deposed and the English turned to his cousin Azim-ud-daula, who was quite happy to accept a handsome pension and no responsibilities. The unfortunate Ali Hussein wilted and died (April 6th, 1802).

The witnesses' evidence, together with the Seringapatam documents themselves, may be found at length in a House of Commons collection, *Papers concerning the late Nabob of the Carnatic* (ordered to be printed June 21st, 1802).

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(Josiah Webbe and Barry Close) who were appointed to examine the evidence, that the long-familiar figures of Ghulam Ali and Ali Raza pass from our view for the last time.

Yet even that was not the end of the old equation, Tipu = conspiracy. Five years later, another generation felt its lingering force.

The settlement of the dispossessed family at Vellore had been accomplished in stages. As we saw in the previous chapter, only the four senior princes went off with the first convoy, and when Dr. Buchanan passed through Seringapatam in May 1800 at least five of the younger sons were still there. He describes how these 'well-looking boys' were permitted to ride and exercise themselves in the square, to watch the parades and to listen to the military band. But eventually the ancient palace of the Nawabs of Arcot in Vellore Fort housed all Tipu's children—and not them only. The survivors of Haidar Ali's and Tipu's zenanas; the older princes' own wives, concubines and children (Fath Haidar alone finished up with eight sons and sixteen daughters); their innumerable servants; hangers-on of every degree; all these formed part of a community of 'Mysoreans in exile' which numbered up to 3,000 souls and spilt over into a considerable area round Vellore.

It was not a prudent arrangement. The senior princes, under Wellesley's generous pension scheme, had allowances of 50,000 rupees a year. This enabled each of them to live in some luxury and to maintain his petty court, modelled as far as possible on their father's but infested by a troop of what Marriott calls 'idle, useless and frequently worthless dependants'. Apart from the rackets which these 'gentlemen companions' conducted with the tradespeople, we hear a good deal about their 'principal trade and profit, viz. that of pimping'. Mysterious covered doolies being smuggled into the palace . . . a succession of unfortunate girls procured by the prospect of marriage to one or other of the sons of Tipu . . . Marriott lets himself go over such mildly shocking details, and there is no doubt that the characters of the princes, several of whom at first showed traces of ancestral energy and intelligence, deteriorated through a long course of having plenty of money and nothing whatever to do.

Rather more accessible is the report on the documents by Colonel N. B. Edmonstone, Persian Translator to the Government (Appendix O to Wellesley's *Despatches*, Vol. II). It runs to a mere thirteen pages of close print.

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It would have been surprising if none of them had also nourished dreams of a return to power, and even carried on intrigues to that end. Yet when a situation arose which might seem to give them the maximum opportunity for mischief, they either ignored it or muffed it. This was the famous Vellore Mutiny of 1806—famous because it so strikingly foreshadowed the vaster crisis of 1857. As then, unrest among the sepoys was stoked by unexplained innovations, which the credulous could construe as a plot to make Christians of them. There was to be a new type of turban having a suspicious leather cockade, caste-marks and ear-rings were to be banned on parade, every soldier was in future to be ‘clean shaven on the chin’ and (in the inimitable language of Section XI, Para. 10 of the Commander-in-Chief’s Order of March 13th, 1806), ‘uniformity shall be preserved in regard to the quantity and shape of the hair upon the upper lip, as far as may be practicable’.

A few sensible Englishmen, as well as Indians, saw the danger behind these seemingly trivial minutiae. Thomas Munro, writing home to his father on September 4th (after the tumult had died down) remarked that a stranger who read the Madras regulations would naturally suppose that the sepoys’ beards descended to their girdles, whereas they had been, as long as he could remember, ‘as smooth upon the chin as Europeans’. He went on,

Peter the Great found the Russian beard a tough job. Beards and whiskers are not such weighty matters in Europe as formerly, but even now an order to shave the heads of all the troops in Britain, leaving them only a lock of hair upon the head like Hindoos, or to make all the Presbyterian soldiers wear the image of the Pope or St. Anthony instead of a cockade, would I suspect occasion some expressions, if not acts of disloyalty.¹

‘Acts of disloyalty’ is in fact a mild expression for what happened at Vellore. In the early hours of July 10th, parties of armed sepoys seized the magazine and attacked both the small European garrison (four companies of H.M.’s 69th) and their own English officers. The colonels of the 69th and of the 23rd Native Infantry were murdered, along with eleven other officers and eighty-two N.C.O.s and privates. Complete disaster was only averted by the arrival of Colonel Gillespie with his galloping guns

¹ Glieg’s *Munro*, Vol. I, p. 365.

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from Arcot, nine miles away—another theme for the galloping pen of Sir Henry Newbolt:

They've kept the tale a hundred years,
They'll keep the tale a hundred more;
Riding at dawn, riding alone,
Gillespie came to false Vellore.

Officialdom, determinedly blind to the consequences of its own acts, at first tried to put the whole thing down to the machinations of Tipu's sons. But very little came out of the various courts and commissions of enquiry¹ to show that they took an active part in the rising, and nothing at all to suggest that they originated it. Two who at least may have known in advance what was going on and would have been happy to profit by the mutineers' success were Muin-ud-din and Muiz-ud-din. The former gave betel and arms to several groups visiting him, and Tipu Sultan's flag ('a sun in the centre, with green tiger stripes on a red field'), which was hoisted on the Garrison flagstaff by sepoys and palace servants, came from Muiz-ud-din's house. Some witnesses said that it had merely been looted (it now reposes in Windsor Castle). Certain of the princes' followers took a more active part—for example, a son of the faithful Saiyid Ghaffar who died on the battlements of Seringapatam, was accused not only of having been active in 'instigating the sepoys to mutinous acts', but actually to have taken charge of the six-pounder guns brought against the barracks of the 69th, and to have laid and fired them.

Government now decided that, whether innocent or guilty, the princes must be removed from Vellore and this 'little Mysore' in the Carnatic broken up. On August 9th Colonel Harcourt, the local commander, wrote to the Madras Council that the persons whom it was highly desirable to shift in the first place numbered forty-two—i.e. the total male issue of Tipu Sultan (twelve sons and twenty-four grandsons), one or two of his nephews and his unfortunate brother Karim, whose senses were 'somewhat

¹ The official papers on the Vellore Mutiny, which are very voluminous, may be consulted in Home Misc. 507-9, I.O.R. Important also is a strongly defensive *Memorial* (London, 1810), presented to the Court of Directors by Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor of Madras (and future Governor-General), who was sacked.

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deranged at intervals' and whom Tipu had always kept under a gentle restraint.

In the end, some fifty-two people left Madras by sea on August 20th. There was no demonstration from the large crowd which watched them go. They were bound for Calcutta, and a Minute of the Governor-General-in-Council (August 14th, 1806) reveals that it had been decided to place them in 'close confinement' on the premises of a certain Mr. Andrews at Russapuglah, formerly used to lodge the Persian Ambassador. This consisted of two bungalows surrounded by walls which enclosed 'a spot of garden ground' and a third house communicating by a covered passage. There was to be no accommodation for women.

The party arrived at the Sands Head off Calcutta on September 12th, and on that day died Abdul Khaliq, the once charming hostage boy, but indicted by Marriott for much cruelty to his women and for general bad conduct in his later years. As to the others, 'close confinement' seems to have been enforced only against Muin-ud-din and Muiz-ud-din; the rest of the family gradually spread out over Calcutta, multiplied rapidly and as long as the Wellesley pensions were paid, continued to live in something like princely dignity and comfort. An attempt to abolish the pensions in 1860 (a time of great financial stringency) was defeated partly through the opposition of the then Viceroy, Earl Canning, but they gradually expired with the deaths of individual holders. Thereafter the position of some branches of the family deteriorated, until today descendants of Tipu Sultan are to be found in many of the humblest walks of life, mainly in Bengal.

For two of the younger Princes, however, a less predictable future opened. The eleventh son, Jamai-ud-din, only ten years of age at the time of the Vellore Mutiny, and his rather older brother, Ghulam Muhammad, both made for Europe when they grew up, and became objects of understandable interest to London society. The present writer first encountered Jamai-ud-din's name as a former member of the Oriental Club, to which he was somewhat surprisingly elected in 1837. Sad to say, his behaviour in that stronghold of his family's old opponents did not endear him to either his fellow-members or the staff, but he remained on the books until shortly before his death in 1842.

Ghulam Muhammad was made of more enduring, as well as more attractive, metal. Bowring, who knew him well and once

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rather charmingly sent him a rose from the garden of his father's mausoleum, describes him as a venerable figure, known for his charities and hospitalities, but in London he was a good deal more than that. He enjoyed the friendship of Queen Victoria, no less! With her *tendre* for things Indian the Queen welcomed him to her Court, though like everyone else she felt the strangeness of meeting 'the last son of the once so dreaded Tippoo Sahib' on a social footing. Their relationship is well shown by a passage from one of the Queen's letters (April 6th, 1859) to her daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia:

I send a book of Henry V and lastly a box of Windsor primroses (uninteresting to me). You will also get a pair of screens from poor old Prince Gholam Mohammad, who has brought them for you. He and his son and grandson have just arrived—they were at the levee and dine with us to-night.¹

Shortly before his death on August 11th 1872, the Queen made Tipu's son a Knight of the Order of the Star of India, and the marvel of this investiture was a natural theme for the obituarists. *The Englishman* (August 13th) declared that Ghulam Muhammad's death (from dengue fever) had been hastened by the recent assassination of the Viceroy, the Earl of Mayo, to whom he had been greatly attached; the *London Times* (September 11th) said this 'gentle and unassuming old man' had eschewed all plotting and had thereby won the personal esteem of the Queen; while on a more mundane level the *Times of India* recalled his unwearying defence of the Tipu pensions (including his own £3,738 a year). One of Ghulam Muhammad's grandsons and a great-grandson were in turn sheriffs of Calcutta in 1891 and 1913.

At the height of their panic over Vellore, the Madras authorities decided that they were the victims of a far-spreading plot. Mysore, in their eyes, was riddled with Tipuist conspiracy, and they sent

¹ *Dearest Child. Letters of Queen Victoria and the Princess Royal, 1858-61*, ed. Roger Fulford (London, Evans Bros., 1964). The reference to the 'once so dreaded' Tipu comes from a letter to Lord Dalhousie dated July 26th, 1854. It is printed in Vol. III of *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, ed. Arthur Benson and Lord Esher (London, Murray, 1907).

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portentous warnings to their men on the spot. But Mark Wilks, acting-Resident at the Raja's court, thought nothing of these fears; the troops were all loyal and he saw no sign of effervescence among the old adherents of Tipu. The most sensitive area was no doubt Gurramkonda, Qamar-ud-din's jagir—it was from there, according to one imaginative witness, that Muiz-ud-din had promised to summon ten thousand men if only the Vellore mutineers would hold out for eight days! But not a mouse stirred, even in Gurramkonda.

If Tipuism was dead, or heavily dormant, among the people of Mysore, neither was there much sentiment for the restored régime. When in the course of his travels Dr. Buchanan¹ reached Mailkote, near Seringapatam, he hoped to get some account of the Mysore family, but he was 'entirely disappointed'. The local inhabitants did not seem in any degree interested in their young Raja. Buchanan thought this was because the dynasty had been so long in obscurity that it was no longer looked up to with awe. Maybe so, but the main reason was surely that the much-tried Mysoreans were now only attentive to whoever had power over their lives—and that meant the English. The Raja was indeed the conquerors' 'pageant', and they ill-advisedly emphasised this by establishing the mint, the treasury and all the chief government departments at Seringapatam, which was under their direct control, instead of at the royal city of Mysore or elsewhere within the Raja's residuary realm.²

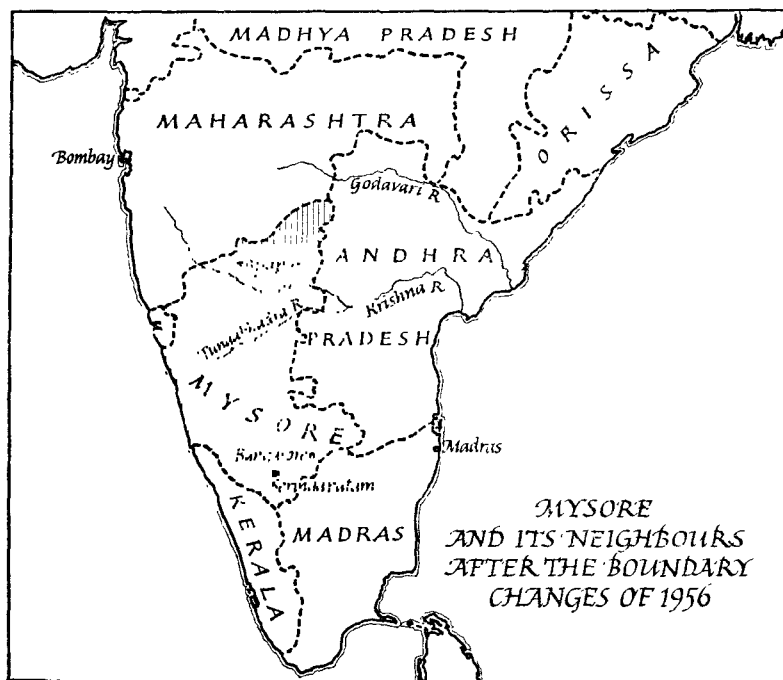
Seringapatam, though universally regarded as somewhat squalid and unhealthy, had the advantage of possessing quite a number of sizeable buildings which could be put to public use—notably the massive warehouses round three sides of the principal square where Tipu, that mercantile monarch, had kept vast quantities of trade goods. Of his palaces, on the other hand, that in the old city appeared to Thomas Babington Macaulay, when he passed that way in 1834, a ruin as forlorn as Tintern Abbey. The Lal Bagh Garden palace (Plate 3) had already disappeared, though its pillars exist to this day, in an extraordinary setting. At

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 343.

² Mark Wilks was one of those who felt that this arrangement had 'not only the exterior appearance but the virtual effect of holding his Highness' Court at a distance from his person'.—*Report on the Internal Administration, Resources and Expenditure of the Government of Mysore* (Fort William, 1805).

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the period when the Nilgiri hill station of Ootacamund was coming into popularity, General Harris's son-in-law, Sir Stephen Lushington, now Governor of Madras, turned up there on an official visit. The sequel was a letter from the Chief Secretary to the Superintendent of the Gun Carriage Factory, which the English had set up in Seringapatam. He suggested that the Lal Bagh palace should be pulled down, 'commencing in such a



MAP 6

manner as to render available . . . materials for a small church suitable to the population of the Nilgiris'.¹ And so the roof of St. Stephen's, Ootacamund, is still supported by pillars of unorthodox profile whose glossy white paint conceals the great teak logs from which Tipu's palace was constructed. Other pillars were used for the Church Mission School, later Sylk's Hotel.

We must not pursue the story of Tipu's capital—or for that

¹ Sir Frederick Price, *Ootacamund, A History* (Madras: Govt. Press, 1908). See also Molly Panter-Downes's charming *Ooty Preserved* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1967).

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matter of his country—much further, save in briefest summary. The restored Raja, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, lived almost as long as Prince Ghulam Muhammad. In 1811, at the age of sixteen, he took over the government from Purnaiya, but in 1831 the English decided, on not very convincing grounds, that he was unfit to rule and his powers passed into the hands of successive Commissioners, of whom Sir Mark Cubbon (Wilks's nephew and namesake) was the most eminent. Krishnaraja Wodeyar died in 1868 and the Government of India at last agreed that direct rule should be ended when his adopted son, Chamaraja Wodeyar, came of age in 1881.¹ From that time onwards the rulers of Mysore, helped by a series of able Dewans, brought their country to the forefront of Indian States. Since Independence, the successive re-drawing of boundaries on a linguistic basis has given 'Karnataka'—the land of the Kannada-speaking people—a vast accession of land and population to the north (Map 6). Coorg, too, has at last been absorbed, though for the historically-minded it is interesting that Mysore has never recovered its long-fought-over Coimbatore territory 'below the Ghats'.

I began this book with an ephemeral French pamphlet. I will end it with a child's reader. *La Nouvelle Épiphanie* placed the Tiger of Mysore in his world setting; Fazl Ahmad's *Sultan Tippu*² locates him in the India of today. 'India', I say, though the author is a Pakistani and the purpose of his little book, besides providing 'easy and interesting reading matter', is 'to acquaint Pakistan boys and girls with the spiritual possessions of which they are to be the guardians'.

There is no suggestion there of inscribing Tipu on some exclusive Pakistan Roll of Heroes, still less of putting his renown to ideological use. Tipu indeed bestrides Partition. As a Moslem prince of Punjab descent he can be acclaimed on Mr. Fazl Ahmad's side of the border, while territorially his Mysore is part of the Republic of India. The author recognises this. It is true that, to catch the attention of his particular audience, he operates

¹ The story is well told in M. Shama Rao, *Modern Mysore* (Bangalore, Higginbotham, 1936), Chap. LXI *et seq.*

² Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1958.

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almost on the level of legend; in the matter of the Travancore Lines, for example, he follows Kirmani—and simplifies him:

Unable to fight the Sultan, the enemy made use of a stratagem. The water of the river was diverted to flood all approaches to the fortress. The Sultan was cut off from the main body of his troops. The enemy now fell upon the Sultan. Of the 4,000 followers who were with him, hardly a man could survive. However with surprising courage the Sultan safely swam across the water and joined his men. When the morning came the Sultan's men fell upon the enemy like wild cats . . .

But Mr. Fazl Ahmad finishes on a universal note with which no one in the sub-continent could quarrel. 'Tipu', he says, 'has rightly been called the last ray of India's hope', being the one ruler who from beginning to end saw where British expansion was leading.

It is of course possible, turning the above statement on its head, to argue that Tipu was eighteenth-century India's ray of hope, not because he might conceivably have beaten and expelled the English, but because of the stimulus, or provocation, or excuse for expansion which his defiance gave them. That British imperialism, in other words, may have been the only road by which India could begin her journey to nationhood in the confusion of the post-Mughul era. However, the last paragraph of this biography is no place to embark on such a thesis! One would prefer to keep one's final word for Tipu the ruler rather than for Tipu the political abstraction. Because he failed in his chief aims and came to a tragical end, the temptation has sometimes been to *patronise* him. He deserves better than that. Looking back over his story, I think it can be seen that he had a rare quality of single-mindedness. As in the style of his letters, so in the shape of his life—Tipu Sultan was always recognisably himself. That is why the English feared him, even beyond reason. And he was a brave man. He may have fallen short in wisdom and foresight, but never in courage, never in aspiration, never in his dream of a united, an independent, a prosperous Mysore.

APPENDIX I

Cornwallis to Medows

(PAGE 171)

The letter which the Governor-General-in-Council addressed to General Medows on September 27th, 1790, begins with congratulations on his success so far and with hopes that the 'spirit of defection' among Tipu's tributaries may help in bringing the war to a successful and speedy conclusion. It reminds Medows of the discretionary power given him in a letter of June 27th to act under certain offers of negotiation without waiting for a reference to 'this Government', and continues:

The daring and restless ambition of Tippoo, the superiority of his talents over the rest of the Princes of this country, the mischievous purposes to which these talents have been constantly applied, not only in oppressing his subjects and tributaries but in disturbing the tranquillity of all his neighbours, would undoubtedly render it desirable as well for our future peace as for the cause of humanity that he should be driven from that throne which his father so unjustly usurped, and that the representative of the family of the Mysore Rajahs should be put into possession of their ancient territories.

Many circumstances may, however, occur consistent even with great success on our part, which would not allow us in prudence to carry our views quite so far; amongst these, are to be reckoned the prospect of a considerable protraction of the war, the doubtful and suspicious conduct of our allies and, lastly, the proposals that might be made to us by Tippoo himself.

Tyrant and usurper as he is, we must recollect that we have repeatedly acknowledged both his father and himself as Sovereigns of Mysore, and if after your army and Colonel Kelly's have happily ascended the Ghauts he should, upon finding his capital and his Government in imminent danger, send to you to say that he was ready to submit to such terms as you would impose upon him, we do not think you could with propriety answer that nothing but his life, or indeed his deposition, would satisfy us.

In order, therefore, to relieve you of the necessity of giving

APPENDIX I

such an answer, or of losing the two most favourable months for military operations, by a reference to Bengal, and to obviate any difficulty you might otherwise feel in acting with regard to our allies—as well as to enable you to prevent Tippoo from being forced to throw himself into their hands by a total rejection on your part of all his offers of accommodation—we have thought it right to empower you, in the event of the case which we have supposed, to inform him that you will on certain conditions agree to a cessation of arms; but that as the losses and injustices which we ourselves and our allies have sustained from his violent and faithless conduct demand ample reparation, you must be possessed of the most substantial pledges of sincerity before you can consent to suspend your military operations during a negotiation which, from the various interests which are to be consulted, and the distance of the Supreme Government, must necessarily be of a considerable duration.

It will no doubt require great circumspection in devising means to ensure Tippoo's acquiescence in the terms of peace that we should wish to impose upon him, in the event of any new circumstances arising in the course of the negotiations to give a more favourable appearance to his affairs, and we are of opinion that you should acquire, as security for that acquiescence, one of the three following pledges:

- 1st. His own personal surrender.
- 2nd. His putting you in possession of Seringapatam.
- 3rd. His delivering his eldest son into your hands as a hostage, with the possession of Bangalore.

and in addition to either of these conditions, his making you an immediate payment of a large sum of money as part of the indemnification of the Company for the expenses of the war.

Whether the Mahratta's and the Nizam should have a proportion, and what proportion, of this money must depend on their situation at the time, and how far their claim can be established by their performance of the stipulations of the Treaty; but Tippoo must bind himself to supply a certain sum monthly for the payment and to furnish provision for the subsistence of the three Armies until the Treaty is concluded. Our wish, however, is that the release of all our unfortunate countrymen whom he has detained so long in a cruel captivity should be insisted upon as an

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indispensable preliminary to all negotiations whatever, and on obtaining his promise to put them immediately into your hands, it should be declared to him in the most explicit terms that if it should afterwards be discovered that he had failed in the strictest of that stipulation we should consider all engagements on our part as entirely annulled.

Cornwallis goes on to direct that if Tipu were to agree to the proposed terms, the armies of the Marathas and the Nizam and, through our Residents, the Poona and Hyderabad Courts, should be notified, and assured that the Articles of the Treaty with them would be scrupulously observed; the said Residents, Malet and Kennaway, should then be urgently summoned to Medows's camp and arrangements made for them to meet delegates from the confederate armies so that a general Treaty of Peace could be worked out. The letter ends:

The Treaties which have been concluded on the part of the Company with the Nizam and the Mahrattas will constitute a sufficiently clear basis for our negotiations with those powers; and should the cases happily occur which we have supposed to induce you to summon a meeting of the representatives of all Powers concerned to discuss and arrange their different interests, we shall immediately on receiving notice of the event from you transmit the proper powers to Mr. Malet and Captain Kennaway, with instructions to endeavour to accomplish such objects as we conceive will best tend to secure and consolidate the British Dominion in India.

Bengal Secret Consultations,
October 1st, 1790

APPENDIX II

The Malartic Proclamation

Liberty

Equality

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

ONE AND INDIVISIBLE

PROCLAMATION

By ANNE JOSEPH HYPPOLITE MALARTIC, Commander in Chief and Governor General of the Isles of France and Réunion, and of all French Establishments to the Eastward of the Cape of Good Hope.

CITIZENS,

Having for several years known your zeal and your attachment to the interests and the glory of our Republic, we are very anxious, and we feel it a duty, to make you acquainted with all the propositions which have been made to us by Tippoo Suldaun, through two Ambassadors whom he has despatched to us.

This Prince has written particular letters to the Colonial Assembly; to all the Generals employed under this Government; and has addressed to us a Packet for the Executive Directory.

1. He desires to form an offensive and defensive Alliance with the French, and proposes to maintain, at his charge, as long as the War shall last in India, the Troops which may be sent to him.

2. He promises to furnish every necessary for carrying on the war, wine and brandy excepted, with which he is wholly unprovided.

3. He declares that he has made every preparation to receive the succours which may be sent to him, and that on the arrival of the troops, the Commanders and Officers will find everything necessary for making a War, to which Europeans are but little accustomed.

4. In a word, he only awaits the moment when the French shall come to his assistance, to declare war against the English, whom he ardently desires to expel from India.

As it is impossible for us to reduce the number of soldiers of the 107th and 108th Regiments and of the regular guard of Port Fraternité, on account of the succours which we have furnished

TIGER OF MYSORE

to our Allies the Dutch; we invite the Citizens, who may be disposed to enter as Volunteers, to enrol themselves in their respective Municipalities, and to serve under the banners of Tippoo.

This Prince desires also to be assisted by the Free Citizens of colour; we therefore invite all such who are willing to serve under his flag, to enroll themselves.

We can assure all Citizens who shall enrol themselves, that Tippoo will allow them an advantageous rate of pay, the terms of which will be fixed by his Ambassadors, who will further engage, in the name of their Sovereign, that all Frenchmen who shall enter into his armies, shall never be detained after they shall have expressed a wish to return to their own Country.

Done at Port North West, the 30th January, 1798.

(*signed*) MALARTIC

APPENDIX III

Newbolt's 'Seringapatam'

The following poem by Sir Henry Newbolt originally appeared in *The Island Race* (London, Elkin Mathews, 1898) and was subsequently published in his *Poems: New and Old* (London, John Murray, 1912). It is reproduced here by permission of Mr Peter Newbolt.

SERINGAPATAM

'The sleep that Tippoo Sahib sleeps
Heeds not the cry of man;
The faith that Tippoo Sahib keeps
No judge on earth may scan;
He is the lord from whom ye hold
Spirit and sense and limb,
Fetter and chain are all ye gain
Who dared to plead with him.'

Baird was bonny and Baird was young,
His heart was strong as steel,
And life and death in the balance hung,
For his wounds were ill to heal.
'Of fifty chains the Sultan gave
We have filled but forty-nine;
We dare not fail of the perfect tale
For all Golconda's mine.'

That was the hour when Lucas¹ first
Leapt to his long renown;
Like summer rain his anger burst,
And swept their scruples down.

¹ When on May 10th, 1781, all the officer prisoners at Seringapatam were placed in irons (see page 225), Captain Lucas volunteered to wear a second pair to save his friend Baird, who was wounded in the leg. Baird himself was put into irons on November 10th, 1781, but they were removed again the following April because of his sickness. Lucas died in prison on July 3rd, 1782 (Hook's *Life of Sir David Baird*).

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'Tell ye the lord to whom ye crouch,
His fetters bite their fill;
To save your oath I'll wear them both,
And step the lighter still.'

The seasons came, the seasons passed,
They watched their fellows die;
But still their thought was forward cast,
Their courage still was high.
Through tortured days and fevered nights
Their limbs alone were weak,
And year by year they kept their cheer,
And spoke as freemen speak.

But once a year, on the fourth of June,
Their speech to silence died,
And the silence beat to a soundless tune
And sang with a wordless pride;
Till when the Indian stars were bright
And bells at home would ring,
To the fetters' clank they rose and drank
'England! God save the King!'

The years came, the years went,
The wheel full-circle rolled;
The tyrant's neck must yet be bent,
The price of blood be told;
The city yet must hear the roar
Of Baird's avenging guns,
And see him stand with lifted hand
By Tippoo Sahib's sons.

The lads were bonny, the lads were young,
But he claimed a pitiless debt;
Life and death in the balance hung,
They watched it swing and set.
They saw him search with sombre eyes,
They knew the place he sought;
They saw him feel for the hilted steel,
They bowed before his thought.

APPENDIX III

But he—he saw the prison there
In the old quivering heat,
Where merry hearts had met despair
And died without defeat;
Where feeble hands had raised the cup
For feebler lips to drain,
And one had worn with smiling scorn
His double load of pain.

‘The sleep that Tippoo Sahib sleeps
Hears not the voice of man;
The faith that Tippoo Sahib keeps
No earthly judge may scan;
For all the wrong your father wrought
Your father’s sons are free;
Where Lucas lay no tongue shall say
That Mercy bound not me.’

APPENDIX IV

The Story in Art

The iconography of Tipu and of the events of his reign is complex, and the most that can be done here is to provide a fairly representative list of paintings and drawings, and of the engravings made from them. It has been particularly difficult to trace the present whereabouts of pictures by such minor masters as Henry Singleton and Thomas Stothard.

Works of reference which have proved valuable are Sir William Foster, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Paintings, Statues etc. in the India Office* (London, The Stationery Office, 5th ed., 1924) and *British Artists in India* (London, The Walpole Society, Vol. XIX, 1931); *The Victoria Memorial, Calcutta—Illustrated Catalogue* (Calcutta, The Government of India Press, 1925); and *Descriptive List of the Pictures in the Viceroy's Residences at New Delhi, Simla and Calcutta* (Government of India Press, 1936). The basic work on the last two named appears to have been done by Sir Evan Cotton.

Portraits of Tipu

Virtually all the extant portraits are so similar in character that they must either date from the same period or derive from a common source. If the latter, it is almost certainly the oil painting by G. F. CHERRY, who was Persian Secretary to Lord Cornwallis during the 1791–2 campaign. The history of this work is given in *Tippoo's Tiger*, where it is reproduced along with three other portraits allied to it:

1. An engraving which forms the frontispiece to James Hunter's *Picturesque Scenery in Mysore* (London, 1795). A closely similar engraving is in Beatson and an admirable version in gouache by an Indian artist was presented to the Oriental Club, London, in 1848.

2. The Victoria and Albert Museum gouache which I have chosen for Plate 1.

3. A water colour by a South Indian artist of about 1865 (Victoria and Albert Museum).

Portraits not related to Cherry are one of Tipu as a young man derived from an Urdu history and reproduced in Mohibbul Hasan's *Life*, and a full-length which, according to the *Descriptive List* (above),

APPENDIX IV

was presented to the Government of India by Sir P. C. Tagore in 1934 and hung in the corridor to the State Dining Room at Viceroy's House. The picture was then attributed to Zoffany, but I have been unable to obtain any further details of it.

Purely imaginative images of Tipu had appeared as early as September 1791, in the satirical prints referred to on page 165. By December, cartoonists of the calibre of Isaac Cruickshank and Gillray were joining in, the former with *How to Gain a Compleat Victory and Say you have got Safe out of the Enemy's reach*, the latter with *The Coming-on of the Monsoon*. There was a further outburst of derision the following May, when a premature rumour that Seringapatam had fallen, received a month before the authentic news of Tipu's defeat, provided a 'killing' on the Stock Exchange. William Holland, for example, put out a print on the 18th, in which each member of the Cabinet received an individual jab:

'The Chancellor looked like a frolicksome Ram
To hear we have taken Seringapatam.'

and the pay-off couplet was:

'The Stocks were forced up five per cent by the flam
Of our having taken Seringapatam.'¹

By contrast, the incidents in Tipu's career which most strongly engaged the fancy of the 'history painters' were of course the surrender of his sons to Lord Cornwallis as hostages, and his own last struggle and death.

The Hostages

MATHER BROWN (1761-1831). For details of this American-born artist, see *The Oriental* (op. cit.), pp. 114-16.

1. *Marquess Cornwallis Receiving the Sons of Tippoo Sahib as Hostages* (84 × 110 ins.). The Oriental Club, London. For a smaller version (22½ × 30½ ins.), see the Victoria Memorial Catalogue, No. 986. *Engraved* Daniel Orme, published E. Orme, January 1799. I have been unable to solve the mystery of why no earlier issue of this engraving (Plate 11) apparently exists, though the blurb for Brown's 'Great Print and Picture' referred to in the text bears every mark of red-hot topicality. One possible explanation is that the two engravings mentioned below were brought out first and did not 'take' sufficiently well for the Ormes to go ahead with a third venture. Yet January 1799 seems a very early

¹ Examples of these and other satirical prints relating to Cornwallis's campaign may be found in the British Museum, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires* (Vol. VI, 1784-92), Nos. 7904, 7923-9, 7932, 8090, 8903.

TIGER OF MYSORE

date for 'cashing in' on the Fourth Mysore War, and the whole thing may have been a sheer misprint.

2. *The Departure of the Sons of Tippoo from the Zenana.*

3. *The Sons of Tippoo Delivering the Definitive Treaty to Lord Cornwallis.* 2. and 3. are a pair, $16\frac{1}{2} \times 23$ ins. In Rosebery sale at Christie's, May 5th, 1939. Present location uncertain.

(2) was engraved by F. Bartolozzi, (3) D. Orme. Both were published by E. Orme, December 1793.

GEORGE CARTER (1737-94). In India 1786-9 approx.

Failed in India, but after his return home sent out to Calcutta a painting of the Hostages. Even though this work, at least in the opinion of a writer in the *Bombay Courier* (January 12th, 1793), united 'the brilliancy of Titian with the softness of Correggio', no one came forward to pay the 10,000 rupees asked for it, and what happened to it afterwards is not known.

ARTHUR WILLIAM DEVIS (1763-1822).

1. *Marquess Cornwallis Receiving the Hostage Princes of Mysore before Seringapatam.* In his *Biographical Notes on the Devis Family of Painters*¹ Sydney H. Pavière remarks that 'a good deal of uncertainty exists' about the various versions of this picture. He can say that again! Devis, a much more sensitive artist than Mather Brown, was in India between 1785 and 1795 and brought back his original version unfinished. The following three pictures can definitely be identified:

a. 70×78 ins. Coll. Hon. Robert Biddulph. Inscribed, 'Begun in India, finished in London, September 20th, 1803.' Bought by John Biddulph, Devis's much-tried patron, in January of that year.

b. 108×144 ins. Coll. Edward Holland-Martin, Overbury Court. This was also bought unfinished by Biddulph, who paid the artist five guineas for completing it in March 1805. Later this very large canvas was sent to India to be disposed of by lottery, but the scheme was unsuccessful, and back it came at the end of 1819. Confusion has been caused by the suggestion of Sir William Foster and others that the picture was cut up by the artist's widow and sold as separate portraits. Since in Devis's groups, as in Mather Brown's (Plate 11), bodies and even heads overlap, this seems improbable,² and the picture returned

¹ *The Walpole Society*, Vol. XXV, 1936-7, p. 157.

² Yet the Floyd family have a small head-and-shoulders of their ancestor, Sir John, which by strong tradition was cut out of one of the Devis's paintings.

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from India is almost certainly the one bought by Robert Martin, a Biddulph connection by marriage, at Christie's on March 14th, 1846, for 91 guineas.

c. 40 × 50 ins. Coll. The United Service Club, London. Nothing seems to be known of the history of this charming variant (which includes a portrait of Devis himself with a portfolio under his arm) before it was discovered in a pawnshop by Major-General Sir Henry Floyd, Bt., son of a Mysore Wars veteran. It was given to the Junior United Service Club by Major H. R. Floyd in 1889 and later passed to the 'Senior'.

2. *The Hostage Princes with the Vakil Ghulam Ali Khan*. I have ventured to give this title to a picture which appears in the *Viceroy's Residences* list (No. 59) as 'The Departure of the Two Sons of Tipu Sahib from their Father' and is tentatively attributed to Robert Home. But Mrs. Mildred Archer agrees with me that the figure seated in a sort of carrying chair is clearly the lame vakil and that the whole composition, especially the poses of the boys, is in the style of Devis. The moment is that of the hostages setting out to hand over the Definitive Treaty, represented by a long roll carried by an English officer (Sir John Kennaway?).

ROBERT HOME (1752-1834). In India from 1790 onwards.

Reception of the Mysorean Hostages by the Marquess Cornwallis. In the Royal Academy, 1797, along with his *Death of Colonel Moorhouse at the Storming of the Pettah Gates at Bangalore*.

JAMES NORTHCOTE, R.A. (1746-1831). Never in India.

The Two Sons of Tippoo Saib. This painting on copper (26 × 20 ins.) is in the possession of Lieutenant-Colonel W. A. Whitehead, Instow, N. Devon. A curious work which, being signed and dated 1792, must have been painted virtually without reference. It shows Cornwallis as a svelte young buck in tricorn and scarlet coat, stepping eagerly down from a dais to receive the hostage boys as though for the first time, though a copy of the Definitive Treaty lies on the ground. A vakil with long grey locks turns away his head to weep.

In Northcote's own list of his paintings, appended to his autobiography,¹ there is a reference to a print by 'Gildrey'—a pseudonym used by Gillray, who engraved the picture in 1794. It has none of his satirical touches, though the Gillray technique comes through strongly and Cornwallis has been 'thickened up' to some extent.

¹ See Stephen Gwynn, *Memorials of an Eighteenth Century Painter* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1898).

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HENRY SINGLETON (1766–1839). Never in India.

1. *The Departure of the Hostages from Seringapatam*. Royal Academy, 1794. Eng. L. Grozer, Pub. J. Grozer, August 1793, as 'Tipoo Sultan. delivering his Two Sons to Gholam Ali Beg the Vakil'.

2. *The Hostages presented by the Vakil to Lord Cornwallis*. Royal Academy, 1793. Eng. L. Grozer. Both engravings were reissued under slightly different titles in 1799.

JOHN SMART sen. (1741–1811). In India 1788–93.

Miniature portraits of the hostages, *Abdul Khaliq* and *Muiz-ud-din*, now in the British Museum (Plate 10). Thomas Twining¹ saw Smart at work on his drawings on August 8th, 1792. He describes the sitters, particularly Muiz-ud-din, as very cheerful and polite, and says that Tipu, when asked whether he would accept the portraits, replied, 'Yes, provided that they are accompanied by Lord Cornwallis'. They evidently never reached him.

JOHN ZOFFANY, R.A. (1733–1810). In India 1783–9.

Lord Cornwallis Receiving the Son of Tipu Sultan. This picture (No. 984 in the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta) in which only one hostage is shown, is not now generally accepted as by Zoffany. On the other hand a study 'The Finding of the Body of Tipu Sultan', sold with the contents of his studio, is supposed to have been a companion piece to it.

MISCELLANEOUS

The India Office Library has a pair of curious and primitive engravings published by Haines & Co. in April 1796. They are *Marquis Cornwallis Receiving the Sons of Tippoo Saib* and *The Return of Tippoo Saib's Two Sons to their Mother*—the only known representation of the latter affecting scene. Unfortunately the mother resembles one of the blowsier mistresses of the Prince Regent.

The Capture of Seringapatam

ARTHUR WILLIAM DEVIS

The Finding of the Body of Tipoo Sahib. 40 × 30 ins. Coll. Lord Biddulph. Pavière mentions another version, almost identical but with the proportions reversed, also owned by this family.

W. HEATH

The Storming of Seringapatam. Neither the artist nor the picture is

¹ *Travels in India a Hundred Years Ago* (London, Osgood, McIlvaine, 1893), p. 66.

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known to me except through the engraving by T. Sutherland, published by J. Jenkins, December 1815.

SIR ROBERT KER PORTER (1777-1842). Not in India until much later.

1. *The Storming of Seringapatam.*

a. The huge panorama described on page 316. After exhibition at the Lyceum, it was offered to the East India Company but refused. It is said to have been later destroyed by fire.

b. A smaller version 23 × 110 ins. made for purposes of engraving (see below). Bought by the 10th Earl of Stair, now in the collection of 12th Earl (Plate 20a).

Engraved in three sections by J. Vendramini. Central section (the breach) January 1802; right section July 1802; left section January 1803.

It seems at least possible that 'a fine oil painting 12 ft. × 14 ft., *The Storming of Seringapatam* which was lot 205 when the works of art from Vauxhall Gardens were sold off in 1841, may have been connected with the above. In an article on the Vauxhall decorations (*Burlington Magazine*, January 1953) Lawrence Gowing states that this picture was wrongly attributed to Hayman (d. 1776!).

2. *The Finding of the Body of Tipoo Sultan.* Known to me only through the engraving by S. W. Reynolds (Plate 21a), published by James Daniell, August 1800 (see also Singleton, 3, below).

HENRY SINGLETON

Painted four pictures, of which only one original has been traced:

1. *The Assault and Taking of Seringapatam.*

2. *The Last Effort and Fall of Tippoo Sultaun.*

3. *The Body of Tippoo Sultaun Recognised by his Family.*

4. *The Surrender of the Two Sons of Tippoo Sultaun to Sir David Baird.*

Coll. Sir David Baird, Bt.

No fewer than five engravers set to work on all or part of this highly topical series. They were:

a. LAMINET. All four scenes, with various vignettes of Wellesley, Harris etc. Distributed by Akademische Kunsthandlung, of Augsburg, with captions in German and English. Undated.

b. B. ROGERS. Scenes 2 and 4 only: 2 with vignette of 'The Surrender of the Hostages to Lord Cornwallis'; 4 with vignette of 'The Attempted Assassination of Lord Cornwallis', March 6th, 1791' (a rare subject). *Pub.* London Printing and Publishing Co.

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c. N. SCHIAVONETTI jun. 2 only. *Pub.* August 1802.

d. L. SCHIAVONETTI. 3 only. On this engraving the original is wrongly attributed to Ker Porter and so appears in *Tippoo's Tiger*. *Pub.* October 1801.

e. ANTHONY CARDON. 4 only. *Pub.* 1802.

The captions of b., c., d., and e are printed in French as well as English—perhaps to impress Napoleon Bonaparte with the downfall of his ally! The common source of all the engravings except b. would appear to be the publishing partnership of Schiavonetti and Cardon.

THOMAS STOTHARD, R.A. (1755–1834). Never in India.

1. *The Surrender of the Children of Tipu Sultan* (Plate 21b). In a Royal Academy Loan Exhibition in 1894. With Messrs. Spink & Sons, 1970.

Eng. C. Turner, *pub.* Daniell, August 1800.

2. *The Attack on Seringapatam*. Until recently nothing was known of this picture apart from a rare engraving of it in the British Museum (*eng.* S. W. Reynolds, *pub.* John Jeffreys, August 4th, 1800), but the Duke of Wellington has now identified the original, hanging in a corridor at Stratfield Saye. The crossing of the Cauvery is thrillingly depicted, though the assault is apparently taking place at night!

3. *Colonel Wellesley Capturing the Tope*. Perhaps the only representation of this delicate subject—and it seems to have disappeared. It was lent to a Royal Academy Exhibition of 1885 by W. R. Tiffin Esq.

SIR DAVID WILKIE, R.A. (1781–1841). Never in India.

General Sir David Wilkie Discovering the Body of Tipu Sultan. Coll. Sir David Baird, Bt. (on loan to the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, Edinburgh Castle). Striking preparatory drawings are in the British and Victoria & Albert Museums.

Eng. J. Burnet.

MISCELLANEOUS

Of the many popular prints which were rushed out, I will mention only two:

Storming and Taken [sic] *of Seringapatam*. *Pub.* G. Thompson, June 1800. A genuine primitive! A lengthy caption keys such incidents as 'Tippoo Saib being carried off Wounded from among the Slain'; Lord Mornington [on horseback!] Marching his Troops into the Interior of the Palace'; 'A Private carrying a Casket of Jewels away to the Tent', and so on.

The Death of Tipu and the Surrender of Seringapatam. Quickest off the

APPENDIX IV

mark, W. Price got his engraving (complete with an extract from Harris's despatch of May 7th) on to the streets by October 19th, 1799.

Mention should also be made here of the fine series of drawings by THOMAS HICKEY (1741-1824) of Tipu's family and supporters from which are derived Plates 9 and 16, and some of which he worked up into oil paintings. Both drawings and paintings are now in India, but Hickey's drawings of British generals in the 1799 campaign remain in the possession of the Duke of Wellington.

Finally there are the albums of war scenes and landscapes which met a public demand and which are so valuable to us today, e.g.:

ALEXANDER ALLAN, *Views in the Mysore Country* (London, 1794). Plate 8a.

R. H. COLEBROOKE, *Twelve Views of Places in Mysore* (London, 1805, 2nd ed.).

C. GOLD, *Oriental Drawings* (London, 1806). Plates 3, 6, 7, 8b.

R. HOME, *Select Views in Mysore* (London, 1794) and *A Description of Seringapatam* (London, 1796).

J. HUNTER, *Picturesque Scenery in the Kingdom of Mysore* (London, 1805).

APPENDIX V

Relics of Tipu Sultan

I showed at the beginning of this book how interest in Tipu was stimulated by the very large number of relics of him which found their way to the United Kingdom. As with his iconography, I am not pretending to offer a complete list, but some indications may be welcome.

It has also been seen that the means whereby these objects were acquired varied widely—from scenes like that in the prologue to *The Moonstone*, upwards! I will examine just one fairly typical provenance, of the more respectable kind.

On view at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is a brooch presented by Miss M. A. A. Chambers in 1963. She received it from an aunt, Miss E. A. Steincomb, to whom it came as a legacy from the Hon. Mrs. Cochrane. Miss Steincomb noted in February 1878 that Mrs. Cochrane's husband, Captain Cochrane, who took part in the storm of Seringapatam, was allocated a share of the jewels, 'all first-class', taken from the turban of Tipu Sultan. 'Captain Cochrane had 3 valuable necklaces and 3 brooches made of the same in India for his three daughters. The brilliants were of the very first order.'

Windsor Castle also has 'Tipu's turban ornament', and possibly even the very turban or war helmet which, according to other accounts, fell off and was lost in the struggle. So the Cochrane jewels would seem to be a representative instance of objects discovered in the Wardrobe or Treasury being romantically transferred to Tipu's person.

In the following list objects marked with a star were, at the time of printing, on view to the public either permanently or periodically. Such arrangements are obviously liable to frequent change.

ENGLAND & WALES

BERKSHIRE

WINDSOR CASTLE (H.M. The Queen)

A remarkable collection of 'Tipuiana', numbering some twenty-three items. Nearly all are housed, along with many other Oriental exhibits,

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in a group of large showcases in the Vestibule. It would, however, be misleading to star them as on view to the public, since with the exception perhaps of the Tiger Head, they are not distinguishable by visitors, who pass them at a distance. The more important items are:

Gold *Tiger Head* from the base of Tipu Sultan's throne (see also pages 215, 300 and Plate 15b and dust-jacket). Sent home by Lord Wellesley to the East India Company, but at his own suggestion, when Lord Steward in 1831, presented by the Company to King William IV (Resolution of the Court of Directors, November 2nd of that year).

Jewelled *Huma Bird*, which hung above the Throne (Plate 15a). Queen Charlotte, to whom it was sent by Lord Wellesley, bequeathed it to her four daughters, the Princesses Augusta, Elizabeth, Maria, and Sophia. They transferred it in turn to their brother, King George IV, on condition that it should 'never be separated from the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland, having been taken by the British arms' (Memorandum in the Windsor Castle *Inventory*).

Jewelled *Turban Ornament* (see above).

Coat of Crimson Damask, *Helmet* covered with crimson velvet and gold embroidery, *Shield* of Buffalo Hide and *Sabre*, all said to have been taken from or found near the body of Tipu 'at the gates of Seringapatam'. The clothes do not appear to correspond to those described by Major Allan (p. 293) and other observers. The only provenance traced for this group of relics is that they were presented to the Royal Family in May 1811 by Lieutenant-General Sir John Cradock who, though never in India during the Tipu period, was Commander-in-Chief, Madras, at the time of the Vellore Mutiny.

Cap and War Dress, *Horse Trapping* and *Horse's Head Armour*. These articles are inventoried as having been presented by Major C. Davis, October 10th, 1800. Major Davis was in fact acting as emissary for Lord Wellesley, bearing these and other Seringapatam trophies to various members of the Royal Family.¹

Blunderbuss of European workmanship 'taken from the Bedchamber of the late Tippoo Saib . . . placed there for the horrid purpose of shooting the English prisoners that might fall into his hands'. This and another *Blunderbuss* found with it and a *Sheaf of Arrows* 'supposed to have been poisoned', were also Wellesley gifts.

¹ See A. Aspinall, *The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales, 1770-1812*, (Cambridge, 1938), Vol. IV, p. 111. Also a 'A Note of the Articles sent in charge of Major Davis to the Chairman of the East India Company', Home Misc. 255 I.O.R. ff. 473-480.

TIGER OF MYSORE

Curious items, not very Tipuesque in character, are 1½ pairs of red leather '*Half-Boots*', while among the miscellaneous weapons may be noted two *Swords*, one given by General Harris in 1800 and the other the gift of Lord Adam Gordon a year later—an unusually elaborate specimen, on the hilt of which the name of God appears twenty-two times, together with quotations from the Koran. The latter are fully transcribed in the Inventory.

Finally, there is the Sun *Banner* of Tipu's Mysore which was hoisted during the Vellore Mutiny and presented later to the Windsor collection by Major-General Sir Robert Gillespie.

What is believed to be Tipu's *Private Seal* is in the Windsor Castle Library.

DERBYSHIRE

KEDLESTON HALL (Viscount Scarsdale)

*Eight *Armchairs*, a *Settee* and six *Stools*, ivory on deodar wood. This handsome furniture was bought by the late Marquess Curzon in India, as having been the property of Tipu Sultan, but expert opinion has recently thrown doubt upon its date.

ESSEX

AUDLEY END (Ministry of Public Building and Works)

A few Tipu relics came to Audley End, along with a magnificent series of Cornwallis portraits, through the marriage of the 2nd Marquess Cornwallis's daughter Jane to the 3rd Lord Braybrooke. Unfortunately several of them, including an interesting Hunting Ring, disappeared in a burglary in 1951. The only survivors are part of a gold *Incense Burner*, one or two *Swords* and other weapons of uncertain provenance and, more importantly, what is almost beyond doubt the '*War Turban*' presented to the 1st Marquess in 1800 (p. 301). This seemed a distinct 'find' when Mr. Svendgaard, who is in charge of Audley End, took it out of the large wicker hat-box which has evidently been its home for 170 years.

HERTFORDSHIRE

HATFIELD HOUSE (The Marquess of Salisbury)

A **Sword*, 'captured by the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Seringapatam', hangs at the foot of the Grand Staircase. Supposed to have been Tipu's, but nothing more is known except that it was a present from the Duke to the 1st Marchioness of Salisbury.

APPENDIX V

LONDON

BRITISH MUSEUM

Fine agate **Tiger Head* (about 4 ins. high) said to have been part of Tipu's throne (Townley Collection). The Museum also has **Haidar Ali's Dagger*. Jade handle, gold mounts.

ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA, MUSEUM

*Staffs of four standards captured at Seringapatam. Two have silver-gilt finials, finely engraved with Koranic texts. The standards themselves have perished; they were triangular, and had 'tiger-pattern' decoration over their various colours. Associated with them were two small pendants with the sun of Mysore. The other two staffs, with crescent finials, carried the ensigns of Tipu's French corps; one, of republican type, had a tricolour design in the corner, the other displayed the royalist cross.¹

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS

Two **Armchairs*, ivory, with tiger finials, of similar type to the V. & A. specimens (below). A *Table* and another *Chair* are not on view.

TOWER OF LONDON ARMOURIES

A splendid **Mortar* in the form of a seated tiger (Plate 12a). There is a similar mortar in the Rotunda Museum, Woolwich.

**Quilted Cap* and *Cuirass* (Plate 18a).

Various *Small Arms*, including swords, musket barrels and *bayonets with elegant tiger-head sockets.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

*'*Tippoo's Tiger*' (see p. 214 and Plate 17).

**Watch*. 'Found on the person of Tipu Sultan.' Presented to the old Indian Museum by Colonel E. F. Waterman by the wish of his wife, daughter of Brigadier Robert McDowell 'into whose hands as Lieut. McDowell the watch came on 4 May, 1799' (Inscription).

**Brooch* (see above). Turquoises and diamonds in a gold setting.

**Jewel Cabinet* and *Mirror*, semi-European style. Lent by Mrs. D. E. Bromley.

**Malacca Cane*, with repoussé gold handle. From the old Indian Museum.

¹ The standards and pendants are reproduced in colour in Webb, *History of the 12th (The Suffolk) Regiment* (London, Spottiswoode, 1914), the 12th having claimed the capture of eight out of eleven standards brought back to England by Lieutenant Harris. Webb's illustration in turn derives from Captain J. Ford's *Flag Book* of the Royal Hospital (1841); this was bought by Queen Victoria, who presented a replica to Chelsea.

TIGER OF MYSORE

**Sword*. Blade inlaid with the name of Tipu Sultan. Other weapons not at present on view.

**Table*, two *Chairs* and *Footstool*, ivory. All except one chair lent by Earl Amherst. The other chair (and its twin, not on exhibition) came into the possession of Queen Charlotte, were bought by J. Jones at the sale of her effects in 1819 and bequeathed to the Museum in 1882.

Salver, Chinese, eighteenth century. Said to have been 'found buried under Tipu's tent on the field of Seringapatam' (!) and to have been acquired by Colonel James McBean of the 78th Highlanders.

Telescope inscribed 'Col. Wemyss Smith. This telescope was taken from the body of Tippoo Sahib at Seringapatam, May 4th, 1799'.

Dressing-Gown, so-called, but more probably a day dress (see p. 206). Brought back from India by Colonel Williams (label) and presented to the Museum in 1968 by Miss G. Drescha.

Quilted Helmet and *Cuirass*.

Saddle Cloth. Crimson Genoa velvet, gold thread embroidery.

WALLACE COLLECTION, Manchester Square

**Sword*. Engraving of tiger on the blade, together with inscription indicating that it was Tipu Sultan's personal weapon. A mid-nineteenth century acquisition—earlier provenance unknown.

**Dagger*, identical with one in private ownership which has a good line of descent from Seringapatam. A very elegant little piece. Unlabelled (No. 01387).

WELLINGTON MUSEUM, Apsley House

*'*Tippoo's Sword*', broad, in velvet sheath, and **Dagger*. On August 25th, 1848 the Duke of Wellington wrote to thank Mr. Alfred Montgomery for the news that a sword and dagger given by Lord Wellesley to the late Marquess of Buckingham were in the Duke of Buckingham's forthcoming sale at Stowe. He indicated that he would buy them if he had an agent at the sale, and no doubt did so.

Chinese velvet **Hanging*, seventeenth or early eighteenth century. 'Taken from the tent of Tippoo Saib, Sultan of Mysore, at the storming of Seringapatam, 1799.' It seems more likely that this huge and sumptuous hanging (19 ft. x 15 ft.) was found in the Palace rather than in Tipu's constricted fighting headquarters on the battlements. On loan from St. Stephen's Church, Rochester Row, London. On May 2nd, 1848 the Duke of Wellington wrote to his friend Miss Angela (later Baroness) Burdett-Coutts, who built the church: 'I send you the cloth, which I suggest you should make a covering for your new Altar.' Later it hung

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behind the pulpit, to which was fixed a brass plate recording the circumstances of the gift.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE

POWIS CASTLE (Earl of Powis and the National Trust).

Small **Tiger Head*, cast in gold and set with diamonds and rubies, one of the eight original finials from Tipu's throne (Plates 14a and b).

Chamois leather **Gloves* and scrolled **Shoes*, decorated with silver thread.

**Book of Personal Prayers*, illuminated in gilt on rose ground.

Cedar wood **Bed* carved with panels of stylised flowers.

Part of a *Palanquin*.

A number of **Teacups and Saucers* in Sèvres porcelain, nearly all different patterns. Said to have been 'taken from Tipu Sultan's tent' after Seringapatam fell—but see the Apsley House hanging!

Pair of *'Ghulab Daws' (sweetmeat dishes). Inscription states they were found in Tipu's sleeping apartment on the night of the storm.

**Sword*. Gilded hilt decorated with tiger heads (Plate 13a).

Pair of **Cannon* with tiger decoration (Plate 12b). These, like the other Powis relics, were sent or brought home by the 2nd Lord Clive, Governor of Madras in 1799, who married the Herbert heiress of Powis Castle. Were they also the 'Seringapatam cannon' which, as *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* reported, were fired at the opening of Telford's mighty Pont Cysyllte Aqueduct on November 26th, 1805?

SURREY

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM, Camberley.¹

The **Dagger* presented to the 1st Marquess Cornwallis in 1800 (Plate 13d). It passed to Charles Ross, who married a Cornwallis granddaughter and thence to Lieutenant-Colonel P. J. C. and Major E. H. Trousdell. From the same source, part of an **Elephant Housing* in 'tiger-pattern' embroidery.

**Walking Stick* inscribed 'This stick, formed from the upper jaw of the sword fish, was taken out of the Palace of Tippoo Saib, after the storming of Seringapatam . . .'. Received 1965 from the Royal United Service Institution, to whom it had been bequeathed by Mr. T. H. Babbage.

**Treasure Chest*. One of the small 'cash chests' from Tipu's Treasury which were distributed to regiments of the Madras Army. Inscription

¹ To be moved to London in 1971. Some of the Tipu items may remain at Camberley.

TIGER OF MYSORE

states that this one was given to the 1st Batt., 14th Native Infantry (Lindsay's Regiment) and was in regular use as a regimental pay chest until the year 1905.

SUSSEX

ANNE OF CLEVES HOUSE MUSEUM, Lewes.

**Coat of Mail*, said to have been taken from the body of a Mysorean prince. Provenance unknown, but authenticated by 'tiger pattern' inlaid in brass.

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH

SCOTTISH UNITED SERVICES MUSEUM

The following relics are all associated with Sir David Baird.

1. Presented by Baird family:

Arab or Turkish **Shirt*, with mail lining (Plate 18b).

2. On loan from Baird family:

**Helmet* from Tipu's armoury (Plate 18c).

**Sword*, engraved with Tipu's name and 'King of Mysore'; also inscription stating that it was given to Baird by the Army (Plate 13c). (The Museum has another Tipu **Sword* presented by a descendant of Captain James Ferrier, of the Scots Brigade.)

3. Presented by a Mr. Young, grandson of Baird's A.D.C.:

Length of fine **Fabric* from Seringapatam.

Two-piece **Spear*, reputedly belonging to a member of Tipu's bodyguard.

**Amulet*, taken from Tipu's body. According to the *Bombay Courier* (August 4th 1799), 'an officer who was present, with the leave of General Baird, took from Tipu's right arm the talisman which contained, sewn up in fine flowered silk, an amulet of a brittle metallic substance of the colour of silver, and some manuscripts in magic Arabic and Persian letters'.

Items in the hands of private owners, whose collections are not normally accessible to the public, include the following:

SIR DAVID BAIRD, Bt., Senwick, Kirkcudbright. *Silver Box* containing one of Tipu's *Turban Ornaments*. Also the *Sword* (Plate 13b), of London manufacture, presented to General Baird by his field officers.

MR. ALEXANDER BOWLBY, Hampstead, London. *Tiger Head Finial*, similar to the one at Powis Castle,¹ and *Tiger Foot*, both from Tipu's

¹ A third finial is in a private collection in Cornwall.

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throne; also two *Pistol Barrels* inlaid with gold, a *Malacca Cane* and two *Seals*. All these appear to have been acquired by Pulteney Mein, Surgeon to the 43rd Foot.

SIR ROBERT DUNDAS, Bt., Comrie House, Perthshire. One of Tipu's *Jewel Cabinets*, in the style of Boulle, on a stand. Presented by Sir David Baird to Henry Dundas (1st Viscount Melville). Baird and Dundas were close neighbours in Perthshire.

LORD HARRIS, Belmont, Kent. A delightful *Sombrero*, made entirely of feathers which, if Tipu ever wore it, suggests a pleasing side to his character, and a fine silver *Betel tray*, with tiger-pattern decoration; an inscription states that it was procured at Seringapatam by the Rev. G. Keene, who was present at the battle. Also at Belmont are a *Sword*, *Shield* and other weapons.

MR. W. KEITH NEAL, Bishopstrow House, Wiltshire. Three fine *Guns*, one of them a fowling-piece 6 ft. 5 ins. long, and all with tiger-head motifs and grandiloquent inscriptions.

SIR ANTHONY WELDON, Bt., Rathdonnel House, Co. Donegal. *Dagger* said to have been taken from Tipu's body by Lieutenant Weldon, Madras Artillery (later 4th Baronet), who helped in the search for Tipu after the storm. Also a *China Bowl*.

A Dallas link is an *Etui* of cornelian in a silver-gilt casket, owned by LADY VICTORIA WEMYSS; it came to her through her mother, the late Duchess of Portland, a great-granddaughter of Sir Thomas Dallas. Lady Victoria also owns a silver-gilt French box with an inscription stating that it was a present from Louis XVI to 'Tippu Saib' and that it had been sold as Prize.

THE ORIENTAL CLUB, London, owns '*Tippoo's Chair*' (see p. 150).

Finally, MAJOR E. F. FERRABY, of Winchfield, Hants., has a portion of what family tradition describes as 'Tipu Sultan's waistcoat'. It is of purplish brocade and in fact has affinities with the waist cloth which, according to Major Allan, Tipu was wearing when he was killed.

No attempt has been made in this Appendix to cover the variety of *Tipuiana* in India itself, but the Daria Daulat Museum at Seringapatam and the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta, are important locations. Mr. Ami Chand, of Secunderabad, informs me that the famous Salar Jung Museum has Tipu's **Sword* and **Turban* (the former carried by him in his youth) and some ivory **Furniture* presented to him by the French.

Sources

The basic documents of South Indian history in the late eighteenth century are by now fairly well known. They are immensely copious, and I do not pretend to a first-hand acquaintance with more than a small segment of them. Works in Oriental languages I have only been able to study in so far as they may have been translated either wholly, partially or in abstracts; nor have I had direct access to records available solely in India.

Fortunately for the Britain-based writer, both these limitations, especially the second, can be largely surmounted so long as London continues to be host to the India Office Library and Records—that matchless hoard of East India Company manuscripts, printed documents and books, together with all that has been accumulated since the Company was dissolved. To be found there, for example, are the minutes of Council deliberations in all three Presidencies, of which the following are especially relevant to the history of Tipu Sultan:

Bengal Secret Consultations (with slightly varied titles), 1760–1800

Madras Military and Secret Proceedings, 1760–87

Madras Military and Political Proceedings, 1789–1800

Bombay Political, Secret and Select Committee Consultations, 1760–93

Bombay Political and Secret Proceedings, 1794–1800

These can be read in conjunction with the ample documents of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control in London.

In addition, however, there is the remarkable collection of records consolidated into 820 volumes and admirably calendared under the somewhat misleading title of *Home Miscellaneous*, and this has been my constant resource.

Outstanding perhaps among the groups of unpublished MSS. in the Library proper is the Mackenzie Collection, brought together by Colonel Colin Mackenzie, Surveyor-General and Oriental scholar; it is particularly rich in Tipu-period material.

My acquaintanceship with the great deposits elsewhere in Britain—for example, in the British Museum, the Record Office, and the Bodleian—is more superficial, and in some cases only through secondary publications, but I do not think that anything of significance has been overlooked.

SOURCES

Two Government publications which followed the death of Tipu need an explanatory word. The first is the *Official Documents relating to the Negotiations Carried on by Tippoo Sultan with the French Nation* (Calcutta, published by order of the Governor-General-in-Council, 1799).

This collection, from which Chapter Seventeen is largely derived, contains translations of Persian and French documents discovered at Seringapatam, and is organised as follows:

PAPER A: The Malartic Proclamation; No. 1, notes in Tipu's handwriting on the Ripaud affair; Nos. 2-12, queries to and comments from various Heads of Departments on the proposed alliance with the French authorities; Nos. 16-19, letters and narratives of the Ambassadors to Mauritius; No. 20, Tipu's draft letter to the Directory (July 20th, 1798), for delivery by Dubuc; Nos. 21-9, documents relating to the Embassy to Zeman Shah; No. 30, Tipu's draft reply to the Grand Seigneur's letter of September 23rd, 1798.

PAPER B: Nos. 1-17, correspondence, mainly with Mauritius officials, about the French volunteers; Nos. 18-25: the Dubuc Mission; letter from Ripaud to Tipu suggesting a line of conduct with M. Raymond at Hyderabad; the famous intercepted letter from Napoleon to Tipu; and another from Napoleon to the Sherif of Mecca.

PAPER C: Correspondence between Tipu and the Government of India, March 1798-February 1799; Minutes of the Jacobin Club at Seringapatam.

These papers also appear as Appendices to Sir Mark Wood's *Review . . . of the late decisive War in Mysore* (London, Cadell & Davies, 1800).

The second post-1799 compilation which demands more than a footnote is Dr. Buchanan's *Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, first published in three volumes quarto in 1807 (London, Cadell & Davies), though my references are to the more accessible two-volume edition issued by Higginbotham in Madras (1870). Francis Buchanan (he changed his name to Hamilton in 1815), was deputed by Wellesley to make an economic survey of Tipu Sultan's former territories. He set forth on April 23rd, 1800, and finished his tour on July 6th, 1801. The result is overwhelming. As he hustled from one battered town, village or hamlet to another he built up not only an

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incredible mass of data, especially on land ownership and farming technique, but a powerful indictment of the Tipu régime. Both are somewhat suspect, partly because of his fantastic timetable, but also because he could only record what people thought it politic to tell him. It was not merely the Brahmin cultivators of Honavar (Vol. II, p. 298) who were 'cunning as foxes' and so much alarmed about his motives in questioning them that it was useless to rely on anything they said.

Yet no one who has browsed through Buchanan will ever forget his picture of such a town as Periapatam (Vol. I, p. 358) where, after Abercrombie and Tipu, and then Tipu again and Abercrombie again, had passed that way, the ruins had become the abode of tigers, so that even when 'followed by a multitude' he dared not enter any of the temples during the heat of the day.

And so to the chroniclers, my predecessors among the historians of Tipu's age. I quickly realised that there were four—two contemporary and two modern—to whom I would constantly turn.

At the head must be placed Mark Wilks. Dr Spear, in his chapter on Tipu in the 3rd (1958) edition of the *Oxford History of India*, singled out Wilks's *Historical Sketches of the South of India in an Attempt to Trace the History of Mysore* as being still the best account of the subject, while Henry Bruce, the 1920 editor of Meadows Taylor's *Story of My Life*, remarked that 'few books more loudly call for an edition with modern apparatus, edited if possible by some scholar conversant with South India'.

Wilks's masterpiece, first published by Longman, Hurst, Green, Orme, and Brown (3 vols. quarto), between 1810 and 1817, was in fact brought out again in Madras in 1930, under the editorship of Sir Murray Hammick. But this re-issue, with scanty though sometimes useful notes, has not superseded the original, at any rate in British libraries, and my references are to the Longmans edition.

As a headquarters officer throughout the Macartney era; as Brigade-Major to Colonel Stuart in 1790; as Military Secretary to Lord Clive; above all as Resident or acting-Resident in Mysore between 1803 and 1807, when he had those long confidential chats with such survivors of the Tipu régime as Purnaiya, Badr-uz-zaman Khan and even the indestructible Lutf Ali Beg—at every stage Wilks enjoyed unique opportunities to observe and record.

SOURCES

As to his personal qualities, we have the singular testimony of the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte! Wilks was Governor of St. Helena when Napoleon so dramatically turned up in 1815. Unfortunately he was replaced almost at once by Hudson Lowe. The Duke¹ thought it was a great mistake to have substituted a man 'so wanting in education and judgement' for the courtly and well-read East Indian veteran. Napoleon, he added, had become really attached to Wilks and often remarked, '*Pourquoi n'ont-ils pas laissé ce vieux Gouverneur? Avec lui je me serais arrangé, nous n'aurions pas eu de querelles!*' The whole sad St. Helena story would certainly have been different had the historian of Mysore stayed on.

Wilks's book is never to be taken as gospel, and indeed his prestige has perpetuated some fallacies, but its main structure stands like a rock.

As a corrective to its thoroughly Anglo-Saxon approach, nothing could be better than the Persian periods of Husain Ali Khan Kirmani, as translated by Colonel W. Miles. His chronicle, the *Nishan-i-Haidari*, was brought out by Miles under the auspices of the Oriental Translation Fund as two separate works — *The History of Hydur Naik* (1842) and *The History of the Reign of Tipu Sultan* (1844). Mohibbul Hasan, in his critique of the various Tipu chronicles, claims for the *Nishan-i-Haidari* that it was written by one who knew Haidar and Tipu intimately and is 'the only extant contemporary history which gives a detailed account, and covers the full period of their reigns'. On the other hand, it is known that after the fall of Seringapatam, Kirmani entered the service of Colonel Colin Mackenzie, and his picture of Tipu's last years, especially, may be seen partly through Mackenzie's eyes. He is also a little vague about people, places, and dates. But what a pleasure it always is to consult him!

Before going on to the modern chroniclers, a word about other accounts of Tipu from his own side of the hill. The most important perhaps is the one which exists both as the *Sultan-ut-Tawarikh* (MS. 521, I.O.L.) and the *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi* (MS. 299, I.O.L.), the latter being, as Mohibbul Hasan points out, virtually a first-person version of the former. Wilks declares (though without proof) that the *Sultan-ut-Tawarikh* was written by Zain-ul-

¹ Earl Stanhope, *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, 1831–51. First published 1886, reissued in the World's Classics 1938 (pp. 66, 326–8).

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Abidin Shustari under dictation from Tipu; he is dismissive of it as a record of fact but finds in it a useful text for reflections on Tipu's literary and moral shortcomings. Both the *Sultan-ut-Tawarikh* and the *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi* break off abruptly before the Third Mysore War, and their main value would seem to be in giving the Mysorean version of the events leading up to the Treaty of Mangalore (1784) and of the war with the Marathas which followed.¹

Various other *Tarikh*s listed by Mohibbul Hasan are brief and imperfect and it does not appear that anything substantial is added to our knowledge either by them or by the rather sketchy contemporary histories of Haidar Ali and Tipu derived from Maratha and Hyderabad sources.

The two present-day chroniclers to whom I owe quite as great a debt as to Wilks and Kirmani are Professor Mohibbul Hasan and Dr. C. Hayavadana Rao.

The former's *History of Tipu Sultan*, Calcutta (Bibliophile Ltd., 1951), is certainly the most scholarly attempt so far made in the English language to put Tipu's life into a coherent and readable form. The author has consulted an immense range of Indian and European sources, many of them never drawn upon before his time. I have already hinted at the only criticism of him on which I would venture—that he sometimes goes too far in presenting his hero as indeed a hero, exempt from blemish or spot!²

Just before Mohibbul Hasan's book came out appeared the three-volume *History of Mysore*, by C. Hayavadana Rao (Bangalore, Government Press, 1948). As Kirmani counterweighs Wilks, so Hayavadana Rao contrasts with Mohibbul Hasan, since he writes frankly from the point of view of the Wodeyar dynasty suppressed by Tipu, restored by the English and, at the time his *History* was published, still the effective rulers of Mysore State. The whole of the gigantic third volume of 1376 pages is devoted to the period 1767–99, and therefore to the careers of Haidar Ali and his son. It is not perhaps a faultless feat of organisation, but the stuff is there!

¹ For a quote *in extenso* from the *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi*, see Kirkpatrick, *Letters*, Appendix B, dealing with the Bednur campaign and the surrender of Mathews.

² Some modifications may be expected, I understand, in a new and thoroughly revised edition of Professor Hasan's book, due about the same time as my own.

SOURCES

Finally, a word about the only biographical study of Tipu made by any English writer between the early nineteenth century and the appearance of the present work. This is L. B. Bowring's *Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, published by the Clarendon Press in 1893 as part of their 'Rulers of India' series. Bowring might well have produced a valuable book, since he was something of a scholar and was Commissioner in Mysore from 1762 to 1870, but he sticks too timidly to Wilks. In fact, there is rather more to be gained from his chattier *Eastern Experiences*, which includes some charming letters about Mysore in the '60s by his wife.

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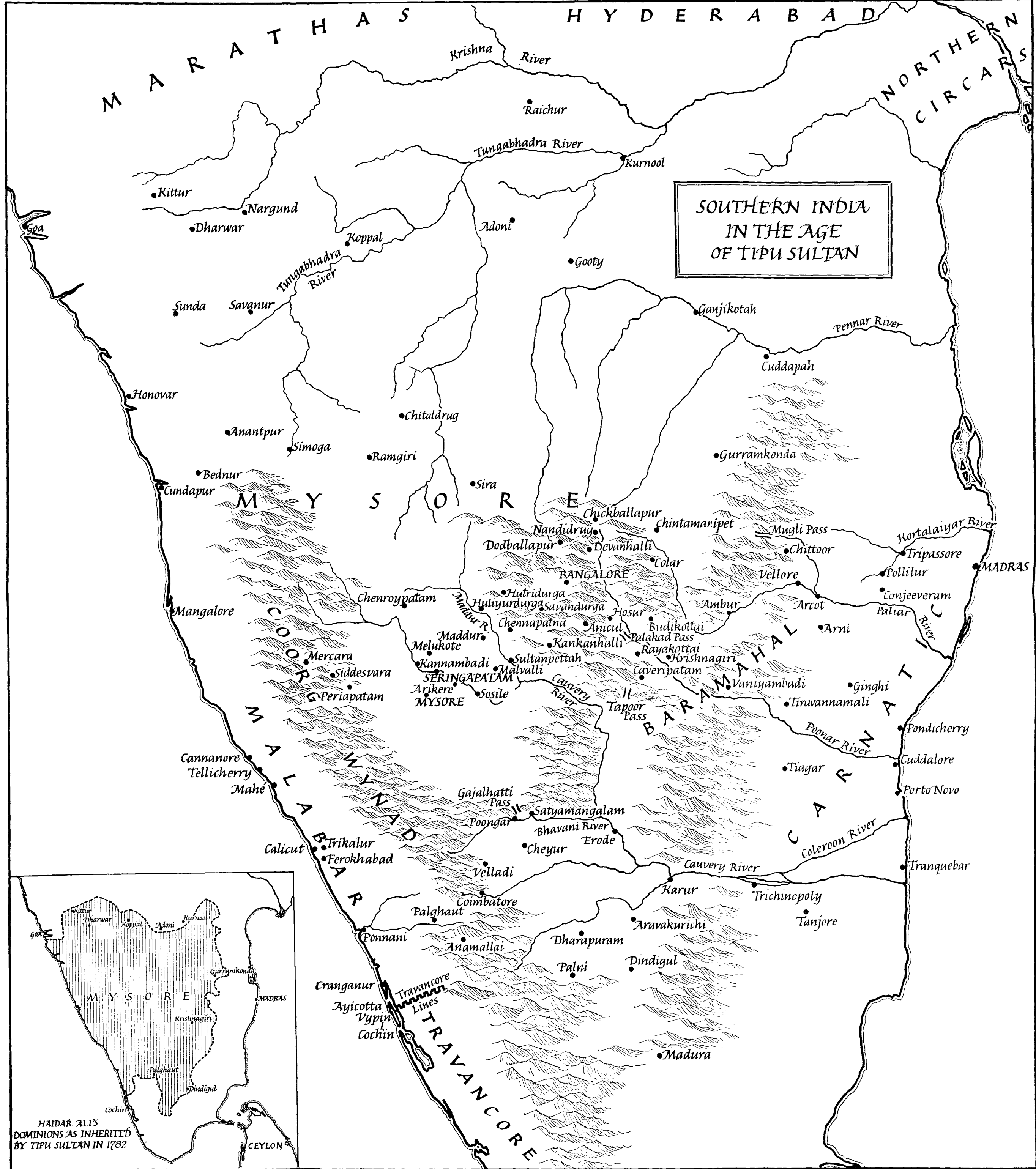
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